

Are You Ready?

PREPARING FOR
WINTER WEATHER

WASHINGTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

WINTER 2007

Are You Ready?

Is a series of handouts designed to assist you and your family to plan ahead for emergencies.



For information on Winter Weather Preparedness go to these sites:



Washington County Fire & Emergency Services/
Emergency Management
33 W. Washington St.
Hagerstown, MD 21740
240-313-2930



www.fema.gov



www.redcross.org



www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.asp



Washington County
Health Department
1302 Pennsylvania Ave.
Hagerstown, MD 21742
240-313-3200
<http://washhealth.org/>

Keep Your Eye on the Sky

Paying attention to the changing weather conditions and listening to NOAA

Weather Radio, commercial radio and television for the latest winter storm warnings, watches and advisories are great tools for winter weather preparation. The National Weather Service issues outlooks, watches, warnings and advisories for all winter hazards. Here are some definitions of different weather warnings:

Winter Weather Advisory:

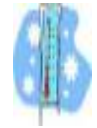
A minor accumulation of snow, sleet and freezing rain is expected

Winter Storm Watch:

Significant accumulation of snow and/or ice is possible within 36 hours.

Winter Storm Warning:

A storm with six or more inches of snow/sleet/freezing rain within a 24-hour period is expected.



Extreme Cold

When winter weather temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm can become a challenge. Extremely cold temperatures often accompany a winter storm, so you may have to cope with power failures and icy roads. Although staying indoors as much as possible can help reduce the risk of car crashes and falls on the ice, you may also face indoor hazards. Many homes will be too cold - either due to power failure or because the heating system isn't adequate for the weather. When people must use space heaters and fireplaces to stay warm, the risk of household fires increases, as well as the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Plan Ahead

Prepare for extremely cold weather every winter - it's always a possibility. There are steps you can take in advance for greater wintertime safety in your home and car.

Emergency Supplies List:

- An alternate way to heat your home during a power failure:
 - Dry firewood for a fireplace or wood stove, or kerosene for a kerosene heater
- Furnace fuel (coal, propane or oil)
- Electric space heater with automatic shut-off switch and non-glowing elements
- Blankets
- Matches
- Multi-purpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher
- First aid kit and instruction manual
- Flashlight or battery-powered lantern
- Battery-powered clock or watch
- Extra batteries
- Non-electric can opener
- Snow shovel
- Rock salt
- Special needs items (diapers, hearing aid batteries, medications, etc.)

Winter Survival Kit for Your Home:

- Food that needs no cooking or refrigeration, such as bread, crackers, cereal, canned foods and dried fruits. Remember baby food and formula if you have young children.
- Water stored in clean containers, or purchased bottled water (5 gal. per person) in case your water pipes freeze and rupture.
- Medicines that any family member may need.

Heating Safety

If you do not have heat, contact your building owner.

- Ø Fuel-burning items (such as furnaces, boilers, hot water heaters and clothes dryers) should be working, ventilated and inspected by a professional regularly in order to prevent unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Ø Electric heaters should be used with extreme caution to prevent shock, fire and burns.
- Ø Materials near heaters should be kept at least three feet from the heat source to prevent fire.
- Ø Gas ovens and burners should never be used to heat your home.
- Ø Never leave children unattended near a space heater.
- Ø Avoid using extension cords to plug in your space heater.



EMERGENCY RELEASE PROCEDURES FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

In the event of inclement weather or another emergency, an announcement will be made regarding whether the **health department** will have a delayed opening or closing, or if liberal leave is in affect. The announcements will specifically indicate the Washington County Health Department. If you do not hear an announcement that the Washington County Health Department is closed or is delaying their opening time, you should report to work at your normal scheduled time. You can hear information from the following sources: WJEJ (1240 AM), WARK (1490 AM), WQCM (94.3 FM), WCRH (90.5 FM), WWEG (106.9 FM), WHAG (1410 AM), WAYZ (104.7 FM), and WHAG TV (NBC 25).

For more information, please refer to the Washington County Health Department Emergency Release Procedures.

Winter Survival Kit for Your Car

Equip your car with these items:

- Ⓟ Blankets
- Ⓟ First aid kit
- Ⓟ A can and waterproof matches (to melt snow for water)
- Ⓟ Windshield scraper
- Ⓟ Booster cables
- Ⓟ Road maps
- Ⓟ Mobile phone
- Ⓟ Compass
- Ⓟ Tool Kit
- Ⓟ Paper towels
- Ⓟ Tire chains (in areas with heavy snow)
- Ⓟ Tow rope
- Ⓟ Bag of sand or cat litter (to pour on ice or snow for added traction)
- Ⓟ Collapsible shovel
- Ⓟ Container of water and high-calorie canned or dried foods and a can opener
- Ⓟ Flashlight and extra batteries
- Ⓟ Canned compressed air with sealant (for emergency tire repair)
- Ⓟ Brightly colored cloth



Preparing Your Car for Winter

You can avoid many dangerous winter travel problems by planning ahead. Have maintenance service on your vehicle as often as the manufacturer recommends. In addition, every fall:

- * Have the radiator system serviced, or check the antifreeze level yourself with an antifreeze tester. Add antifreeze, as needed.
- * Replace windshield-wiper fluid with a wintertime mixture.
- * Replace any worn tires, and check the air pressure in the tires.

During winter, keep the gas tank near full to help avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.

HEALTH MATTERS: Outdoor Safety

****When the weather is extremely cold, and especially if there are high winds, try to stay indoors. Make any trips outside as brief as possible, and remember these tips to protect your health and safety.**

Avoid Overexertion:

Take your time while shoveling snow or pushing a car. Stretch before you go out and stay hydrated. Drink plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated fluids.



Avoid Ice!

Walking on ice is extremely dangerous. Many cold-weather injuries result from falls on ice-covered sidewalks, steps, driveways and porches. Keep your steps and walkways as free of ice as possible by using rock salt or another chemical de-icing compound. Sand may also be used on walkways to reduce the risk of slipping.

Stay Warm and Dry



- T Wearing loose, lightweight, warm clothes in layers traps air, which acts as insulation.
- T Remove layers to avoid perspiration and subsequent chill.
- T Outer garments should be water repellent.
- T Wear a hat. Half of your body heat loss can be from the head.
- T Wear mittens instead of gloves, they are warmer.
- T Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from extremely cold air.
- T Make sure small children and infants stay warm, as they can easily become hypothermic under conditions that would not be as dangerous for adults.