

Winter Checklist



AT HOME

Before the extreme cold hits:

- Insulate pipes in crawl spaces and attics.
- Heat tape can be used to wrap pipes.
- Seal leaks that allow cold air inside, especially near the location of pipes.
- Disconnect garden hoses and, use an indoor valve to shut off and drain water from pipes leading to outside faucets.
- Have the furnace inspected by a professional. Make sure it's in good shape to last through the winter.
- Test your thermostat. Turn it to heat mode to make sure the furnace kicks on and blows warm air.
- Inspect and clean your roof and gutters from debris.
- Install storm windows and doors.

When the temperature drops:

- A TRICKLE of water might be all it takes to keep your pipes from freezing. Let warm water drip overnight, preferably from a faucet on an outside wall.
- OPEN cabinet doors to allow heat to get to uninsulated pipes under sinks and appliances near exterior walls.

If you are away:

- Set the thermostat no lower than 55 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Shut off and drain the water system if you will be gone for a long period of time.

If your pipes freeze:

- If you detect your water pipes have frozen, turn off the water at the main shut-off valve in the house; leave the water faucets turned on and call a plumber.
- Never try to thaw a pipe with a torch or other open flame. You may be able to thaw a frozen pipe with the warm air from a hair dryer.
- Do not use electrical appliances in areas of standing water because electrocution is possible.

To avoid carbon monoxide hazards:

- Always use generators outdoors and away from doors, windows, and vents.
- Install battery-operated or plug-in (with battery backup) carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home.
- Test CO alarms and replace batteries when needed.
- Never heat your house with a gas, wood or charcoal grill.
- Pay attention to flu-like symptoms, especially if more than one person has them. Headache, dizziness, confusion, fatigue and nausea are all common symptoms of CO exposure.
- Move outside to fresh air immediately if a carbon monoxide leak is suspected.



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PREPARING FOR A WINTER STORM

At home:

- Keep handy a battery-powered flashlight, portable radio, extra food (canned or dried food is best), can opener, and bottled water.
- Make sure each member of the household has a warm coat, gloves, hat and water-resistant boots. Ensure extra blankets and heavy clothes are available.
- Keep on hand items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.
- Keep on hand items for your pets. Animals feel the effects of wind chill. Be sure to have suitable shelter with food and water.
- Be aware of potential fire and carbon monoxide hazards if you plan to use an emergency heating source such as a fireplace, wood stove or space heater.

To avoid generator electrical hazards:

- Keep the generator dry. Operate on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure.
- Dry your hands before touching the generator.
- Plug appliances directly into generator or use a heavy-duty outdoor-rated extension cord. Make sure entire extension cord is free of cuts or tears and the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.
- Never plug the generator into a wall outlet. This practice, known as back-feeding, can cause an electrocution risk to utility workers and others served by the same utility transformer.
- If it's necessary to connect the generator to house wiring in order to power appliances, have a qualified electrician install appropriate equipment. Or, your utility company may be able to install an appropriate transfer switch.

To Avoid Fire Hazards:

- Before refueling the generator, turn it off and let it cool. Fuel spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.
- Always store fuel outside of living areas in properly labeled, non-glass containers. Store fuel away from any fuel-burning appliance.

Automotive preparedness:

- Winterize with the proper mix of antifreeze and water in the cooling system, topping off the windshield washing solution, and checking the tire treads.
- Keep the fuel tank near full, as low fuel levels can cause condensation to form, degrading fuel quality and possibly causing the fuel line to freeze.
- Your car should always be equipped with emergency supplies. Keep the following items stored in a portable container:
 - A small battery powered radio and extra batteries
 - Flashlight with extra batteries
 - Cellular phone charger
 - Windshield scraper
 - Jumper cables
 - Fire extinguisher
 - Maps
 - Shovel
 - Blanket and extra clothes
 - Flares
 - Bottled water and non-perishable, high energy foods
 - First aid kit
 - Tire repair kit and pump
 - Tow chain or rope
 - De-icer and extra antifreeze
 - "Call Police" or other "Help" sign
 - Salt or kitty litter for weight and use in slippery spots for traction.



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