



TOWN of BOYLSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT of FIRE & EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

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Surviving a Winter Storm

You may need to survive on your own after a severe winter storm. This means having your own food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a storm, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it might take days. While the danger from winter weather varies across the country, nearly all Americans, regardless of where they live, are likely to face some type of severe winter weather at some point in their lives. That could mean snow or subfreezing temperatures, as well as strong winds or even ice or heavy rain storms. One of the primary concerns is the winter weather's ability to knock out heat, power and communications services to your home or office, sometimes for days at a time. The National Weather Service refers to winter storms as the "Deceptive Killers" because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. Instead, people die in traffic accidents on icy roads and of hypothermia from prolonged exposure to cold. It is important to be prepared for winter weather before it strikes.

Get an Emergency Supply Kit which includes items like non-perishable food, water, a battery-powered radio, extra flashlights and batteries. Thoroughly check and update your family's Emergency Supply Kit before winter approaches and add the following supplies in preparation for winter weather. Rock salt to melt ice on walkways Sand to improve traction Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment. Also include adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm.

Make a Family Emergency Plan. Your family may not be together when a storm strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency. Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, daycare and school. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one.

Familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify winter weather.

Frost/Freeze Warning means below freezing temperatures are expected.

Winter Weather Advisory means cold, ice and snow are expected.

Winter Storm Watch means severe weather such as heavy snow or ice is possible in the next day or two.

Winter Storm Warning means severe winter conditions have begun or will begin soon.

Blizzard Warning means heavy snow and strong winds will produce a blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts and life-threatening wind chill.

Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit

Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation

Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food

Battery-powered radio with tone alert and extra batteries

Flashlight and extra batteries

First aid kit

Whistle to signal for help

Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place

Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation

Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)

Local maps

Cell phone with chargers

Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit

Prescription medications and glasses

Infant formula and diapers

Pet food and extra water for your pet

Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container

Cash or traveler's checks and change

Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov

Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.

Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes.

Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper – When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant.

Fire Extinguisher

Matches in a waterproof container

Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items

Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels

Paper and pencil

Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

Water

One gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation.

Children, nursing mothers, and sick people may need more water.

Store water tightly in clean plastic containers such as soft drink bottles.

Keep *at least* a three-day supply of water per person.

Food

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.

Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water.

Pack a manual can opener and eating utensils.

Avoid salty foods, as they will make you thirsty.

Choose foods your family will eat.

Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables, protein or fruit bars, dry cereal or granola, peanut butter, dried fruit, nuts, crackers, canned juices, non-perishable pasteurized milk, high energy foods, vitamins, food for infants, comfort/stress foods

First Aid Kit

Things you should have:

Two pairs of Latex, or other sterile gloves.
Sterile dressings to stop bleeding.
Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes.
Antibiotic ointment to prevent infection.
Burn ointment to prevent infection.
Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes.
Eye wash solution to flush the eyes.
Thermometer
Prescription medications (periodically rotate medicines to account for expiration dates).
Prescribed medical supplies

Things That may be good to have In Your Kit:

Scissors, Tweezers, Petroleum jelly
Nonprescription drugs, Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever, Anti-diarrhea medication, Antacid, Laxative

Additional Resources

www.ready.gov Ready, Plan, Prepare

www.fema.gov Federal Emergency Mgt Agency

www.fema.gov/kids FEMA for Kids

www.nws.noaa.gov National Weather Service

www.mass.gov/mema MASS Emg Mgt Agency

www.boylston-ma.gov Town of Boylston