



Preparing for Winter Storms

Winter storms can range from moderate snow over a few hours to blizzard conditions with blinding, wind-driven snow or freezing rain that lasts several days. The time to prepare is before the snow falls and ice forms.

The first step is to listen for “watch” and “warning” alerts from the National Weather Service.

A winter storm watch

A storm watch indicates that severe winter weather may affect your area.

A winter storm warning

A winter storm warning indicates that severe winter weather is in your area or is expected imminently.

Preparing for winter storms

- Tune your weather radio, AM/FM radio, or television to hear the latest updates and information.
- Have appropriate cold weather clothing available.
- If you have a kerosene heater, refuel your heater outside and remember to keep it at least three feet from flammable objects.
- Have rock salt and sand on hand for traction on ice.
- Fill your gas tank before the snow starts falling.
- Keep an emergency auto kit readily available.
- Make sure your fireplace functions properly.

During a winter storm

- Wear several layers of loose fitting, light weight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing.

- Wear mittens rather than gloves.
- Wear a warm, woolen cap on your head.
- Conserve on fuel by reducing the internal temperature in your home.
- Do not overexert yourself if shoveling snow.
- Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Do not use charcoal or gas grills to cook or heat indoors.

If in your vehicle

- Stay on the main roads.
- If you must stop your vehicle, remain inside the vehicle. Use a bright distress flag or your hazard lights to draw attention to your vehicle.
- If trapped in a blizzard, clear your tail pipe and run your engine and heater for 10 minutes every hour. Open your window slightly.
- During night hours, keep the dome light on in the car so rescue crews can see your vehicle.
- Make sure your vehicle disaster preparedness kit is well stocked and readily available.

**WASHINGTON
MILITARY
DEPARTMENT**



**Emergency
Management
Division**

www.emd.wa.gov
1-800-562-6108

Building 20, MS: TA-20
Camp Murray, WA
98430-5122