

# Winter Storm Partners Toolkit

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## Purpose

This toolkit provides messaging, graphics and resources to help your community protect lives, learn the risks of winter weather, promote fire safety and urge caution when traveling in winter weather. Because winter weather brings risks that can be avoided with appropriate preparation, we're asking you to share important winter safety and preparedness messages.

By sharing winter safety and preparedness messages, you can provide information to your communities and encourage survivors to ask themselves the following questions:

- How will I receive [emergency alerts and warnings](#)?
- How can I keep my family and I safe and warm if the [power goes out](#)?
- What is my [shelter](#) plan? Where will my family and I go if we can't stay home?
- What is my [family/household communication plan](#)?
- Do I need to update my family's [emergency preparedness kit](#)?

## Toolkit Sections

[Ready.gov](#) | [Social Media Toolkits](#) | [FEMA Blogs](#) | [Sample Text](#) | [Additional Resources](#)

## Ready.gov

[FEMA's Ready Campaign #WinterReady page](#) has tips and resources people can use to learn how to protect themselves from common cold-weather risks, including power outages, home heating fires, carbon monoxide poisoning and travel. The page also includes tips for those who are an [older adult, work or play outside](#), need [low-cost solutions for home heating](#) and those who [don't typically experience winter weather](#).

## Social Media Toolkits

Ready.gov features a social media toolkit in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) with suggested safety and preparedness messages and graphics you can share on your social media channels. You can either copy these messages directly or customize them to reach your audience. [Safety graphics](#) are available for sharing.

## FEMA Blogs

[4 Tips to Prepare for Winter Weather Risks](#)

[3 ways stay safe and warm this winter](#)

## Sample Text for Social Media and More

- Severe winter storms can bring extended power outages. Make sure you heat your home safely. Be careful if you use a generator: keep it outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows, doors and garages.
- Consider postponing non-essential travel until the roads are cleared. If you must drive, increase your following distance to other vehicles from 3-4 seconds to 5-6 seconds.
- Snow and freezing rain can bring the risk of power outages. If you lose power during a winter storm, don't use a gas stove or oven to heat your home and check with local officials about open warming centers nearby. More on power outage safety here: [ready.gov/power-outages](https://ready.gov/power-outages).
- When there's a threat of winter weather coming to your area, make sure you're prepared. Have different emergency supply kits at home, at work and in the car. Visit [ready.gov/kit](https://ready.gov/kit) for a list of what supplies to include in each kit!
- Visit [ready.gov/winter-ready](https://ready.gov/winter-ready) to learn about some of the common hazards you might face with colder weather. We have resources for low-cost home heating solutions, winter-proofing your home and winter travel safety. Use these resources to keep yourself safe.

## Sample Text for E-mails, Handouts, Articles, Flyers and More

### Power Outage

#### OPTION 1

It's important to prepare before a winter storm hits. A good place to start is to understand the hazards and risks associated with cold weather and winter storms. **Snow and freezing rain can make travel dangerous and bring the risk of long duration power outages.** If you lose power during a winter storm, it's important that you can safely stay warm. Travel is discouraged, but if you must do so, make sure you have what you need and know what to do to stay safe if you get stranded.

#### OPTION 2

Heavy snow and freezing rain can cause power outages that last several days. There are some low-cost tips you can use to keep your house as warm as possible if the heat goes out:

- Close the vents and shut the doors in rooms you're not using.
- Place a rolled towel at the bottom of all doors to keep drafts out.
- Keep window coverings like blinds or curtains open during the day to take advantage of the sun's heat in the winter – especially windows that get direct sunlight. Close them at night to keep heat from escaping.

### Alerts

Being able to get alerts and warnings is critical in large winter storms because forecasts can evolve, and the storm impacts may change. Sign up for state and emergency alerts from your local public safety officials. Download

the [FEMA App](#) to receive real-time weather and emergency alerts for up to five different areas nationwide, send notifications to loved ones, locate emergency shelters in your area, get preparedness tips and more.

## Warming Stations

If you can't keep your house warm, go to a community warming center. If a shelter opens in your area, understand that you may not be able to take your pets with you. Visit your community's emergency management website to learn about warming centers or shelters. You can also call 211 which can help you locate help if you need it.

## Road Safety

- **Watch out for freezing rain.** If you must go outside and it's slippery, wear sturdy shoes with good traction. To help maintain balance, keep your hands out of your pockets, take slow, short, shuffling steps and keep your center of gravity over your feet.
- **Slow down.** It takes longer to slow down on slippery roads: increase your following distance to other vehicles to 5-6 seconds and watch for slippery conditions and raised surfaces. Make sure you have your auto insurance provider and a towing company number in a place that's accessible.
- **If trapped in your car during a blizzard, remain in your vehicle** unless you can see a building close by where you know you can take shelter. Run the engine and heater for about 10 minutes each hour to keep warm. Make sure the exhaust pipe is clear of snow to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- **It's best to stay at home** during and immediately after a winter storm, but if you must go out be [ready for the cold](#).
- **During a winter storm, follow guidance from local officials.** If they ask you to stay off the roads, please do so.
- **Check your local weather and traffic reports before heading out and keep supplies in your car.** Tell others your route and anticipated arrival time. Keep an emergency kit in your car including blankets, food and water, first aid, and [other items](#) you may need if you are stranded.

## Outside Safety

- **Dress properly.** Dress in layers and cover as much skin as possible. Make sure to protect your ears, face, hands and feet. Boots should be waterproof and insulated. A hat will keep your entire body warmer.
- **Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.** This can include numb, grayish-yellow or waxy skin, shivering, confusion, fumbling hands, slurred speech or drowsiness. Know [how to treat these conditions](#).
- **Be careful when shoveling snow.** If you're shoveling snow, take breaks and work at a comfortable pace. Overexerting yourself could cause a [heart attack](#).

## Winter Kit Suggestions

- **If possible, get the following items now:**
  - Rock salt or a pet-friendly chemical product to melt ice on walkways.
  - Sand or non-clumping kitty litter to improve traction.
  - Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.
  - Adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm. Include extra blankets for pets and service animals.
- Roads may be unpassable for days. Make sure you have several days of water and non-perishable food for every member of your family and your pets.

## Additional Partner Resources

### U.S. Fire Administration

FEMA's U.S. Fire Administration has many downloadable, co-brandable graphics and materials on a wide variety of fire safety topics for social media and beyond.

- Website link: [USFA | Prevent Home Fires](#)
- Flyers: [#WinterReady Safety Flyers and Handouts | Ready.gov](#)

Additional fire preparedness materials can be found on the [U.S. Fire Administration Fire Prevention and Community Risk Reduction page](#). Most graphics and publications can be co-branded with your city emergency management or fire department logo.

### The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention educational materials page provides fact sheets, flyers and pictograms in multiple languages for many common cold-weather hazards, including carbon monoxide poisoning, generator and furnace safety. Additionally, materials on preventing, recognizing and treating hypothermia are available in English and Spanish at the second link below.

- [CDC | Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Basics](#)
- [CDC | Preventing Hypothermia](#)
- [CDC | Preventing Frostbite](#)