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**General questions:** Patrick O'Neill, DHS, (971) 673-1282

**Technical questions:** Lisa Millet, DHS, (971) 673-1059

## **Prepare for cold weather with emergency check-lists**

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With another storm front moving into Northwestern Oregon and snow and sub-freezing temperatures predicted for the next few days, this is a good time to think about preparing for emergencies.

Experts at the Oregon Department of Human Services Public Health Division warn that cold can kill as well as injure. Preparation can assure that you are safe and warm.

Stock up on emergency supplies for communication, food, safety, heating and car travel in case a storm hits. Here are lists of supplies and precautions you should consider during severe winter weather.

### **At home:**

- Battery-powered radio. Have extra batteries.
- Listen to emergency broadcasts.

### **Know what winter storm warning terms mean:**

- Winter weather advisory: expect winter weather conditions to cause inconvenience and hazards.
- Frost/freeze warning: expect below-freezing temperatures.
- Winter storm watch: be alert; a storm is likely.
- Winter storm warning: take action; the storm is in or entering the area.
- Blizzard warning: seek refuge immediately! Snow and strong winds, near-zero visibility, deep snow drifts, and life-threatening wind chill.

## Food and Safety Checklist

Have a week's worth of food and safety supplies. If you live far from other people, have more supplies on hand:

- Drinking water
- Canned/no-cook food (bread, crackers, dried fruits)
- Non-electric can opener
- Baby food and formula (if baby in the household)
- Prescription drugs and other medicine
- First-aid kit
- Rock-salt to melt ice on walkways
- Supply of cat litter or bag of sand to add traction on walkways
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Battery-powered lamps or lanterns

(To prevent the risk of fire, avoid using candles.)

## Water Checklist

Keep a water supply. Extreme cold can cause water pipes in your home to freeze and sometimes break.

- Leave all water taps slightly open so they drip continuously.
- Keep the indoor temperature warm.
- Allow more heated air near pipes. Open kitchen cabinet doors under the kitchen sink.
- If your pipes do freeze, do not thaw them with a torch. Thaw the pipes slowly with warm air from an electric hair dryer.
- If you cannot thaw your pipes, or if the pipes have broken open, use bottled water or get water from a neighbor's home.
- Have bottled water on hand.
- In an emergency-if no other water is available-snow can be melted for water. Bringing water to a rolling boil for one minute will kill most germs but won't get rid of chemicals sometimes found in snow.

## Heating Checklist

- Have at least one of the following heat sources in case the power goes out: Fireplace with plenty of dry firewood, portable space heaters or kerosene heaters.
- Never place a space heater on top of furniture or near water.

- Use electric space heaters with automatic shut-off switches and nonglowing elements.
- Keep heat sources at least 3 feet away from furniture and drapes.
- Never leave children unattended near a space heater.
- Have safety equipment including a chemical fire extinguisher, working smoke alarm carbon monoxide detector.
- Never use an electric generator indoors, inside the garage, or near the air intake of your home because of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

### **Cooking and Lighting Checklist**

- Never use charcoal grills or portable gas camp stove indoors-the fumes are deadly.
- Use battery-powered flashlights or lanterns.
- Avoid using candles.
- Never leave lit candles alone.

### **Car and Emergency Checklist**

First, avoid driving and use public transportation if possible. If you must drive use chains or other traction devices. You can avoid many dangerous winter travel problems by planning ahead.

Prepare your car with emergency supplies:

- Cell phone
- Shovel
- Windshield scraper
- Battery-powered radio
- Flashlight
- Water
- Snack food
- Extra hats, coats, mittens
- Blankets
- Chains or rope
- Tire chains
- Road salt and sand
- Booster cables
- Emergency flares
- First aid kit
- Tool kit

- Road maps
- Waterproof matches and a can (to melt snow for water)
- Paper towels

### **Fall prevention on icy surfaces**

- Plan ahead, plan your route, and give yourself extra time.
- Wear shoes with non-slip soles.
- Wear cleats that attach to shoes.
- Walking sticks can help you maintain balance.
- Take short steps or shuffle for stability – penguins are good walkers because they shuffle!
- Walk slowly.
- Take shorter steps and plant your whole foot gently down instead of using the typical heel strike that we use when we're walking.
- Avoid inclines.
- Keep hands out of pockets for balance.
- Use handrails where possible.
- Test potentially slick areas by tapping your foot on them.
- Be cautious entering or leaving buildings as ice and water accumulating inside and out create slick conditions.

Finally, check on neighbors, particularly the elderly to make sure that they are warm and safe. Offer to shovel walkways and paths, shop, or take out the garbage for older adults in your neighborhood.

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