

# FEMA REGION II

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS TEAM

## Preparing For A Winter Storm

**BY MAKENNA MILANO**  
FEMA STUDENT VOLUNTEER

**A** winter storm can bring about major risks. Winter storms, including blizzards, can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice and high winds.

These elements may create a higher risk of car accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning and heart attacks from overexertion. There are many reasons to prepare for a winter storm.

These storms can last for a few hours or several days and may cut off heat, power and communication services. They can also put older adults, children, sick individuals and pets at a greater risk and prevent emergency services from responding to calls.

It is important to be aware of your own risk in a winter storm. Look out for a Winter Storm Warning, Winter Storm Watch or a Winter Weather Advisory by signing up for your community's warning system.

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio will also provide emergency alerts.

### How To Prepare

- Make sure the tires on your mobility aid are fit for the weather conditions by modifying the wheels with winter tires or chains.
- Add ice and snow spikes to canes and walkers.
- Have battery backups for smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and keep the fire extinguisher close by.
- Install motion lighting outside, on walkways, stairs and driveways.
- Gather enough supplies to stay indoors for several days without power. This includes generic medications, an individual's specific medications and any pet needs.
- Have extra batteries for radios, flashlights, motor scooters and any other life sustaining equipment.
- Have an extra power supply for any visual alarms.
- Keep extra blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothing on hand.
- Make sure to not block any emergency devices such as fire hydrants and ramps.
- Make sure to have more than one exit point from your home.
- Keep items for snow and ice removal. If necessary, electrically heated mats can be placed on ramps or walkways for winter months, steep ramps can be impossible to use if covered with ice or snow.
- Have an emergency supply kit for your car.
- Keep extra parts and a tool kit available for wheelchairs and motor scooters.
- Have handrails and/or grip matting outside the house.
- Connect with your neighbors, have an emergency plan and check-in daily.

### AVOID CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

If using a generator or grill during a winter storm, keep them outside at all times, at least 20 ft away from windows, doors and attached garages. Never heat your home with a gas stovetop or oven.

Information is available by visiting [Surviving Snow & Ice: UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR WINTER](#) | [Universal Design Resource and Winter Weather](#) | [Ready.gov](#).