

Winter Hazard Awareness

November 05 - 09, 2018

Winter Hazard Week — November 05 - 09, 2018

Are you ready for Winter?

Awareness of Winter Hazards Saves Lives

Know How to Prepare and Respond to Minnesota Winters - Little Things Do Matter!



Winter in Minnesota is beautiful, but...

Winter in Minnesota can be described in many ways, but unpredictable isn't one of them. At some point, it **will** snow and temperatures **will** drop below zero. There **will** be ice on the roads. High winds **will** raise the risk of being outdoors from hazardous to life-threatening.

Minnesota summers are cherished times. People spend every warm minute they can enjoying the outdoors, but as the season turns to fall, and the air turns crisp, we know a Minnesota winter is soon on the way. As we get out the gloves and boots, it's time to refresh our winter safety knowledge and skills - and get prepared.

Minnesota winter is just around the corner and the question is – *are you ready for it?* Getting ready for winter doesn't always take a lot of work. Most Minnesotans, through years of practice and experience, are knowledgeable about winter weather conditions. We know how to dress, drive, be active outdoors and generally get through the winter with our lives, homes and property intact. Nonetheless, deaths and injuries occur every winter because people fail to take precautions. Carelessness, overconfidence, ignorance and innocence can lead to damage, injury or death from winter weather conditions.

The best way to avoid the hazards is to stay warm and cozy indoors, but it's tough to stay cooped up for months — and even staying indoors for long periods carries risks. Problems can arise with indoor air, and fire risks increase dramatically in the winter.

Well, fear not. Surviving, even enjoying, the winter season is not as hard as it may seem. Getting ready for winter doesn't always take a lot of work. Awareness of winter hazards saves lives. Know how to prepare and respond to Minnesota winters.

Little things do matter!

Sometimes it's just a few little things that can make the difference between safety and suffering: having a survival kit in your car, changing the batteries in your carbon monoxide detector, and staying well-hydrated during outdoor fun.

To help Rice County and other Minnesota residents minimize risks and mitigate the hazards of winter, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, in collaboration with the National Weather Service and other county, state, federal and non-profit agencies sponsor "Winter Hazard Awareness Week" each fall to educate, inform, remind and reinforce the behaviors that lead to a warm, safe and enjoyable winter season.

The event includes a media campaign, literature, website (<http://www.winterweather.state.mn.us>) and other informational materials with target specific information each day. The information continues throughout the season on the websites with updates, timely facts and tips which can be used in conjunction with school, church, or civic programs.

Quick Winter Weather Tips:

If you don't have time to review more detailed information, check out these quick reminders of winter-safe behavior:

- **Dress to suit the weather.** Thin layers of loose-fitting clothes will trap body heat and aid air circulation. Outer clothing should be hooded, tightly woven, and water-repellant. Mittens are warmer than gloves. Wear a hat — most body heat is lost through the head.
- **Check the weather forecast before going outdoors or traveling.** Pay particular attention to windchill, which can create dangerously cold conditions. Monitor the National Weather Service forecasts, statements, watches, and warnings for the latest information on a developing winter storm. Their Web site is at www.weather.gov/safety/winter.
- **Watch for signs of hypothermia and frostbite, especially in the very young and the elderly.** Symptoms of hypothermia are shivering, confusion, and loss of muscular control. Frostbite causes loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, tip of nose, and ear lobes. If you see these symptoms, get medical attention immediately.
- **Pace your outdoor activity.** Avoid strenuous activity in extremely cold temperatures. Your heart must work harder to pump blood through constricted vessels in arms and legs.

- **Winterize your home and vehicle before the cold weather arrives.** Prepare an emergency kit for your home and one for your vehicle, and make sure your home heating system is in good working order. If possible, re-insulate your home to avoid cold air leaks and reduce heating costs.

Get Prepared for Winter Weather



Brrr! Cooler temperatures are setting in, which means winter is on its way. Before winter weather hits your area, talk with your family about how to stay safe and take action to get prepared! Planning and preparing can help you manage the impact of severe winter weather.

The *How to Prepare for a Winter Storm* guide from [America's PrepareAthon!](#) outlines steps you can take now, including:

- Gather [emergency supplies](#);
- Make a family [emergency communication plan](#);
- Install battery-powered or battery back-up carbon monoxide detectors;
- If you have access to an **outside** generator, have an electric cord long enough to keep the generator at least 20 feet from any door, window, or vent;
- NEVER use a generator inside your home or in any partially enclosed area; and
- Be alert to changing weather conditions using [local alerts](#), battery-operated radios, and other news sources for information and instructions.

To learn more about preparing for winter weather, take a look at this animated video, and see what to do “[When the Sky Turns Gray.](#)”

****SIGN UP FOR YOUR LOCAL AREA EMERGENCY ALERTS OR UPDATE YOUR EXISTING ACCOUNT USING THIS WEBSITE:**

<https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085612579#/login>

Making a Winter Driving Survival Kit

Use an empty three-pound coffee can or any similar container with a plastic cover to store the following items:

- Small candles and matches
- Small, sharp knife and plastic spoons
- Red Bandanna or cloth
- Pencil and paper
- Large plastic garbage bag
- Safety pins
- Whistle
- Snacks
- Cell phone adapter to plug into lighter
- Plastic flashlight and spare batteries

Tips: Reverse batteries in the flashlight to avoid accidental switching and burnout. Warm batteries before using them. Store safety items in the passenger compartment when severe winter weather threatens in case the trunk is jammed or frozen shut. Choose small packages of food that you can eat hot or cold.

SUGGESTED FOOD ITEMS TO INCLUDE:

- Raisins in small packets
- Semi-sweet chocolate in pieces for sharing
- Miniature candy bars
- Chewing gum
- Wrapped hard candies
- Food bars
- Canned soup, meat and poultry

STORE BULKY AND HEAVY ITEMS IN AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE:

- 30-foot cord to use as homing line when you must exit the vehicle
- Booster Cables
- Basic tools
- Sand, cat litter or other grit in a plastic milk carton
- Shovel
- Tow cables or chain
- Sleeping bag or blankets
- Road flares and reflectors
- Snowmobile suite and heavy boots

Winter Hazard Awareness Week is November 05 - 09, 2018.

Each day of the week is devoted to highlighting a specific topic of information:

Monday, November 05:

[Winter Weather Overview](#) – *Ice storms, blizzards, sub-zero temperatures, winter weather watches and warnings*

Tuesday, November 06:

[Outdoor Winter Safety](#) – *Safety on ice, snowmobile safety, hypothermia and frostbite*

Wednesday, November 07:

[Winter Fire Safety](#) – *Winter and holiday fire safety, alternative heat sources, smoke detectors, cooking safety, candle and decorations*

Thursday, November 08:

[Indoor Winter Safety](#) – *Carbon monoxide, radon, asbestos, mold, winter travel and general home care*

Friday, November 09:

[Winter Driving](#) – *auto safety, snowplows, road conditions, using 5-1-1, winter driving tips, car survival kits*

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For valuable information check out the websites at:

<http://www.winterweather.state.mn.us/>

OR

[Winter Weather Safety website](#)

The website provides simple winter awareness safety tips for work, play, home and travel. There are also lesson plans, Internet resources and direct links to weather warnings, road conditions and more!