

Keeping Minnesota *Ready*



WINTER SAFETY CHECKLIST — FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

GENERAL PREPAREDNESS AND SAFETY

- Make a plan.** Winter weather can have unpredictable consequences. What will you and your family do if you're separated during an unplanned event, like a blizzard or a power outage?
- Make a kit.** Do you have enough reserve supplies on hand to keep yourself and your family warm and safe for an extended time without electricity, heat or access to markets or services? Do you know what your emergency needs would be — and can everyone access those items quickly, under stress?
- Stay informed.** Make sure you have access to information — even if the power is out. Get a battery powered TV, radio or NOAA weather radio. Keep extra batteries handy. If you use a cell phone, be sure you have a vehicle charger.



FOR ADULTS

- Take it easy.** Cold puts extra strain on your heart. Heavy exertion such as shoveling snow, clearing debris or pushing a car can increase the risk of heart attack.
- Don't overheat.** Dress warmly, but peel layers as necessary to stay comfortable.
- Slow down.** Rest frequently to avoid overexertion when working outdoors. If you feel chest pain, stop. Seek help immediately.
- Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of water before and while you are working.
- Stay alert.** Know the signs of **frostbite** and **hypothermia**. Warm extremities frequently.

FOR KIDS

- Stay inside.** During snowstorms, blowing snow and cold can make it hard to see and easy to get lost — even close to home. Wait until the storm is gone to go outside.
- Dress right.** When going out to play *after* a storm, dress in snowsuits or layers of clothing, waterproof coat and boots, mittens or gloves and a hat. Avoid cotton clothing or socks as they can soak up water and offer little warmth.
- Wear a hat.** Body heat is lost through the head, so always wear a hat or hood. Cover your ears, too. They are easily subject to frostbite.
- Wear gloves.** Mittens are even better than gloves, because fingers maintain more warmth when they touch each other.
- Use a scarf.** Keep your neck warm. A scarf can also be worn over your mouth to help protect your lungs from extremely cold air.
- Warm up.** Go inside often for warm-up breaks. Long periods of exposure to severe cold and wind increase the risk of frostbite or hypothermia. If you start to shiver a lot or get very tired, or if skin turns numb or pale on your nose, fingers, toes or earlobes, go inside right away and tell an adult!
- Stay near adults.** Always play near home or where there are adults nearby who can help you. Even familiar places can look different in winter, so don't get lost.
- Stay away from streets and snowplows.** Plows can't slow down or turn quickly, and the snow and salt they throw is dirty and can hurt you. Cars may be sliding; they could hit you if you're in the street.
- Stay off of ice.** Unless a lake or pond has been checked by an adult for thickness and safety, don't go out on the ice.



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PETS AND ANIMALS

- Provide a shelter.** Create a place where your animals can be comfortable in severe winter weather. Make sure any outbuilding that houses or shelters animals can withstand wind, heavy snow and ice.
- Bring pets indoors; shelter livestock** from wind, snow, ice and rain. Grazing animals need access to a protected supply of food and non-frozen water.



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES OR OTHER FUNCTIONAL NEEDS

- Make a plan.** For elderly people and those dependent on assistance or medical equipment, make plans *now* to ensure their needs will be met if winter weather results in power outages, makes communication difficult or prevents personal contact.
- Make a kit.** Stock an emergency kit including a flashlight and extra batteries, extra blankets, a battery-operated radio with fresh batteries, bottled water, non-perishable foods, extra essential medicines and other necessities.
- Have backup power.** If a standby generator or another alternate power source is used, be sure it is functioning properly and that a trained person operates it. Be aware of carbon monoxide produced by generators. NEVER use them in enclosed spaces — even garages.
- Notify others.** Plan with others who could help, such as nearby neighbors, relatives or friends. Exchange phone numbers and always have someone check in after a severe storm or power outage.
- Notify utilities.** Register as a special-needs individual with the local utility to become a priority customer during blackouts and emergencies. Do this *before* weather strikes. Do the same with any special support organizations you're involved with.
- Notify authorities.** Also inform the county or city Office of Emergency Management and the Police or Fire Department that there is a special-needs resident at your address.

For more information about Winter Weather safety, [visit the HSEM Weather Safety website](#)