

Winter Storm

How to Prepare, Survive and Recover from a Winter Storm



Winter Storms can bring freezing rain, ice, snow, high winds, or a combination of these conditions. They can cause power outages that last for days, make roads and walkways very dangerous, and can affect community services. Planning and preparing can help to manage the impact on people who require electricity to power medical equipment, so make sure that you have a plan to take care of yourself and your family during an outage.

(1) Before: Prepare

Prepare now in case a winter storm hits and you are home for several days without power and heat.

- Prepare by gathering emergency supplies, making a family plan, discussing emergency notifications and expectations with workplaces and/or schools.
- Install battery-powered or battery back-up carbon monoxide detectors.
- Store a supply of wood for fireplace or woodstove in case regular heating fuel source is cut off.
- OUTSIDE generator: have an electric cord long enough to keep the generator at least 20 feet from any door, window, or vent.
- Make specific plans for how to avoid driving. Keep gas tank in vehicle full.
- Be alert to changing weather conditions using local alerts, radio, and other news sources for information and instructions.

(2) During: Survive

Stay indoors and avoid driving as much as possible.

- If the power goes out, close off unused rooms to consolidate and retain heat.
- Wear layered clothing and use blankets or sleeping bags to stay warm.
- Bring pets inside.
- Never use generators, outdoor heating or cooking equipment, such as grill, camp stove, or a gasoline or propane heater indoors.
- Never heat a home with a stove.
- If driving is absolutely necessary, keep disaster supplies in your vehicle, make sure vehicle is properly equipped, and use extra precaution on the roads. Let someone know destination.
- Limit time outdoors. When outside, protect from frostbite and hypothermia by wearing several layers of warm, loose-fitting, light-weight clothing.

(3) After: Recover

Driving conditions may still be dangerous; only drive if necessary.

- If the power is out for more than a few days, the community may set up warming shelters, or
- temporary emergency housing.

- If there is not adequate supplies to stay warm in the home consider going to a shelter.
- Replenish used supplies
- Check on elderly neighbors periodically; make sure they have food, heat and medications needed to stay well.



For more sources of information on this topic visit:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT www.scchealth.co

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION www.cdc.gov

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY www.fema.gov