

Cold Weather Safety Tips from Missouri 2-1-1

Missouri 2-1-1 reminds you to take care during cold weather advisories, warnings and emergencies. For information on what to do during a cold-weather emergency, Missouri residents should call 2-1-1 while cell phone users and metro-East Illinois residents can call 1-800-427-4626. For senior citizens worried about not being able to pay for heating, bill assistance information is available by calling United Way at 2-1-1 or 1-800-427-4626. All calls are free and confidential and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days per year.

Taking preventive action is your best defense against having to deal with extreme cold-weather conditions. By preparing your home and car in advance for winter emergencies, and by observing safety precautions during times of extremely cold weather, you can reduce the risk of weather-related health problems.

Below are tips to help keep you safe and warm during cold weather emergencies.

Personal cold weather tips:

- Dress in layered clothing and wear some sort of head gear/covering
- Check space heaters for sufficient ventilation and wire condition
- Never place space heaters close to flammable objects, such as drapes or bedding or on top of furniture or near water
- Make sure fireplace flues are working properly
- Check extension cords for breaks or fraying
- Do not use charcoal or gas grills indoors
- Check on your neighbors – especially the elderly
- Keep pets inside
- 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
- Insulate walls and attic.
- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows.
- Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic from the inside.
- Insulate any water lines that run along outer walls (water will be less likely to freeze).
- Service snow-removal equipment.
- Have chimney and flue inspected.
- Install easy-to-read outdoor thermometer
- Prepare your home and car for cold weather – safety kits are available

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Before a winter storm hits:

- Have a week's worth of food and safety supplies
- Keep a water supply
- Make sure you have at least one of the following in case there is a power failure:
 - Battery-powered radio (for listening to local emergency instructions). Have extra batteries
 - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio receiver (for listening to National Weather Service broadcasts)
- Find out how your community warns the public about severe weather
- Listen to emergency broadcasts

Winter storm warning terms:

- 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.)

Much more cold-weather related information is available at these sites:

- <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/factsheet.asp>
- <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.asp>
- <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/needtoknow.asp>
- <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/links.asp>
- http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/0,1082,0_595_,00.html

About Missouri 2-1-1

2-1-1 is a fast, free and confidential way to get help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 2-1-1 call centers operate under national standards and are staffed by trained specialists who quickly assess the callers' needs and refer them to the help they seek. Information is available on a broad range of services, including food banks, affordable housing, health resources, child care, after-school programs, elderly care, financial literacy, and job training programs.

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