

City of McKinney Office of Emergency Management



Before, During, and After Winter Weather

Before Winter Weather

- Add winter items, such as rock salt, sand, snow shovels, and extra blankets to your emergency supply kit. This is also a good opportunity to check and switch out items that may be expired.
- Prepare your home.
 - Have sufficient heating sources, including back up sources in case of a power outage. This may include a heating fuel, a generator, and extra firewood.
 - Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
 - Insulate pipes with insulation or newspaper and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
 - Keep a fire extinguisher on hand, since alternate heating sources pose an additional risk of house fires.
 - Find your main water valves and learn how to shut them off in case a pipe bursts.
- Prepare your car.
 - Check antifreeze levels to ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
 - Check windshield wiper equipment and maintain proper fluid level.
 - Check other fluid levels, lights, exhaust system, heater and defroster, thermostat, brakes, and fuel and air filters.
 - Check tire air pressure and tread. Replace any worn tires.
 - Maintain at least half a tank of gas.
 - Place a vehicle supply kit in each car.

During Winter Weather

- Listen to local news sources or your NOAA Weather Radio for weather updates and emergency information.
- Conserve fuel if necessary by keeping your house cooler than normal.
- Maintain ventilation when using kerosene heaters and wood burning fireplaces or stoves.
- If the pipes freeze, remove all layers of insulation surrounding the pipe and wrap pipes in rags. Completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they were most exposed to the cold.
- When you are outside:
 - Wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing instead of one heavy layer. Water-repellent outer layers are preferred to keep other layers dry.
 - Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow.

- Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from the cold air.
- Keep dry and change out of wet clothing frequently.
- Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.
- If you are driving
 - Drive only if absolutely necessary. Rearrange travel plans to leave and arrive before or after the storm.
 - Pack your vehicle supply kit.
 - Travel in the day and keep others informed of your schedule.
 - Stay on main roads.
 - Watch for black ice that may have formed on the roadway from freezing rain.
- If a winter storm traps you in your car:
 - Pull off the highway, turn on your hazard lights, and hang your distress flag from your radio antenna or window.
 - Remain in your vehicle and do not set out on foot.
 - Run the engine about 10 minutes each hour to keep warm and keep a window slightly open for ventilation.
 - Exercise to maintain body heat, drink fluids to avoid dehydration, and take turns sleeping.
 - Turn on the inside light at night so people can see and find you.
 - Be careful not to waste battery power by balancing energy needs (heat, lights, radio) with supply.

Extreme Cold Emergencies

- Frostbite symptoms include lack of feeling in the affected area and skin that appears waxy, is cold to the touch, or discolored (flushed, white or gray, yellow or blue).
- What to do:
 - Move the person to a warm place.
 - Handle the affected area gently, and never rub.
 - Warm the affected area by soaking in warm water until it appears red and feels warm.
 - Loosely bandage the area with dry, sterile dressings.
 - If the person's fingers or toes are frostbitten, place dry, sterile gauze between them to keep them separated
 - Get professional medical care as soon as possible.
- Hypothermia symptoms include shivering, numbness, glassy stare, apathy, weakness, impaired judgment, and loss of consciousness.
- What to do:
 - Call 9-1-1 immediately.
 - Gently move the person to a warm place.
 - Monitor breathing and circulation and give CPR if needed.
 - Remove any wet clothing and dry the person.
 - Warm the person slowly by wrapping in blankets or putting dry clothes on. Warm the core first (trunk, abdomen), not the extremities. Do not warm them too quickly as this may cause deadly heart arrhythmias or shock.