



SEVERE WINTER WEATHER

in South Carolina

Are you prepared for a
major winter storm?

Inside

- Know about Ice and Snow
- Stay Connected
- Emergency Information
- Power Pointers
- Winter Checklists and more...

A winter weather resource guide from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division and the State Emergency Response Team.



scemd.org



Winter Weather: Know the Terms



- **Winter Storm Watch:** A winter storm is possible in your area. Tune in to your NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for more information.
- **Winter Storm Warning:** A winter storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area.
- **Freezing Rain:** Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, creating a coating of ice on roads, walkways, trees and power lines.
- **Sleet:** Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes moisture on roads to freeze and become slippery.
- **Frost/Freeze Warning:** Below-freezing temperatures are expected.
- **Black Ice:** Sometimes called clear ice, refers to a thin coating of glazed ice on a surface that is a virtually invisible hazard to motorists.



Power Pointers: During the cold winter months, local fire departments see an increase in the number of heating-related fires and fatalities due to carbon monoxide poisoning. If you lose electricity, know how to report the outage to your power utility and use extra caution when using open flames such as fireplaces and candles. Never use a portable generator indoors or without reading the instructions first. Never burn charcoal indoors. Do not use gas-powered cooking stoves as a heating source for bodily warmth.



Before a Winter Storm



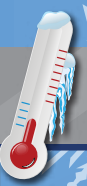
- ✓ Add winter supplies like rock salt and shovels to your disaster supplies kit.
- ✓ Prepare for possible isolation in your home by having sufficient heating fuel; regular fuel sources may be cut off.
- ✓ Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- ✓ Learn how to shut off water valves in case a pipe bursts.
- ✓ Have your vehicle serviced to ensure it is prepared for the winter season.
- ✓ Place a winter emergency kit in every vehicle that includes: a shovel; windshield scraper and small broom; flashlight; battery-powered radio; extra batteries; water; snack food; matches; extra hats, socks and mittens; first aid kit with pocket knife; necessary medications; blankets; tow chain or rope; road salt and sand; booster cables; emergency flares; fluorescent distress flag.

Functional needs: People with mobility problems and hearing, learning, or seeing disabilities can require extra help during a winter storm. The American Red Cross recommends developing a support network of friends, roommates, family members, relatives, personal attendants, co-workers and neighbors with emergency contact information.





During a Winter Storm



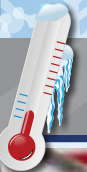
- ✔ Stay indoors. If you must go outside, dress in layers of loose fitting, lightweight clothing. Wear a hat that covers your ears. Wear mittens and cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs. Wear waterproof, insulated boots to keep your feet warm and dry and to maintain your footing in ice and snow.
- ✔ Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack—a major cause of death in the winter. If you must shovel snow, stretch before going outside.
- ✔ Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses all of its insulating value and transmits heat rapidly.
- ✔ Watch for signs of frostbite such as the loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes and the tip of your nose.
- ✔ Drive only if it is absolutely necessary. If you must drive, travel in the day, don't travel alone and keep others informed of your schedule. Decrease your speed and leave plenty of room to stop the vehicle on icy roads.
- ✔ If trapped in your car during a blizzard, pull off of the highway and turn on your hazard lights. Remain in your vehicle where rescuers are most likely to find you. Run the engine and heater about 10 minutes each hour to keep warm. When the engine is running, open a downwind window slightly for ventilation and periodically clear snow from the exhaust pipe. This will protect you from possible carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ✔ Exercise to maintain body heat, but avoid overexertion. Drink fluids to avoid dehydration.
- ✔ Avoid fallen power lines. Ice storms can create a buildup of ice on power lines and on trees. The weight of the ice can cause tree limbs and even entire trees to fall onto power lines, breaking them. Treat all utility lines that have fallen on the ground as energized and very dangerous.



Get real-time road conditions by dialing 511 or visiting 511sc.org online.



After a Winter Storm



- ✔ Listen to your local radio or television station for the latest weather and traffic reports.
- ✔ Go to a designated shelter if your home loses power or heat during periods of extreme cold.
- ✔ Check on your animals and ensure that their access to food and water is not blocked by snow drifts, ice or other obstacles. Shelter them indoors, if possible.
- ✔ Be aware of possible carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock and fire if using alternative sources for electricity, heating or cooking.



Even though many come with fur coats, animals can be just as susceptible to freezing temperatures as we are. Make sure your pets and/or livestock have a warm place indoors to avoid the winter elements.



Here in South Carolina



Delays/Closings: County and State government offices will follow the same winter weather delay/closure decisions. Updated schedules for state government offices will be broadcast via SCETV and will be posted at scemd.org/closings as soon as possible. Monitor local media for information regarding all other winter weather closings such as K-12 schools, municipal government and businesses. Prior to the onset of Winter each year, organizations should develop a list of employees who may be needed during a severe winter storm. Supervisors should communicate internal inclement weather procedures and options (equipment, transportation, telecommuting, etc.) through annual winter-related training opportunities.



Instead of Milk and Bread: With the approach of a winter storm, people may feel the need to buy additional, perishable food items that would not be as useful during an emergency with power outages. Stock up on these types of supplies if you are out of them, but always remember to include at least three days' worth of non-perishable food and bottled water (two gallons per person per day) that your family could need throughout the entire year.

Contrary to popular belief, South Carolina sees its fair share of severe winter weather. During the ice storm of February 2014, there were more than 364,000 power outages statewide, more than 550 people needed emergency shelter and it resulted in more than \$260 million dollars in damages. The most significant Presidential Disaster Declarations over the last decade in the Palmetto State have been due to ice storms (2004, 2006 and 2014).

Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region. Even areas that normally experience mild winters can be hit with a major snowstorm or extreme cold. Winter storms can result in flooding, storm surge, closed highways, blocked roads, downed power lines and hypothermia.

Snow and ice storms, coupled with cold temperatures, periodically threaten South Carolina. Winter storms can damage property, create safety risks, destroy crops and valuable timber, damage infrastructure components such as power lines and have enormous economic impacts.

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