

# Be Prepared: Winter Storms



Preparing for winter storms, whether your work involves being inside, outside or in a vehicle, is crucial to survival and safety. Become familiar with winter storm warning signals so you can take appropriate action, and learn the dangers of winter ailments so you can avoid injury. Use these tips to refresh your knowledge on winter storm preparation.

## Winter Weather Warnings

Keep in touch with the following weather alerts and familiarize yourself with what they mean so you know when to be on your guard and what actions you may need to take:

- **Winter storm watch:** Be alert, a storm is likely
- **Winter weather advisory:** Experts expect winter weather conditions to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous, especially to motorists
- **Frost/Freeze warning:** Experts expect below freezing temperatures that may cause damage to plants, crops or fruit trees
- **Winter storm warning:** Take action, a storm is entering – or is already in – the area
- **Blizzard warning:** The combination of snow and strong winds will produce blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts and life-threatening wind chill – seek refuge immediately

## Gearing Up to Prevent Cold Injuries

Frostbite and hypothermia are serious conditions resulting from extreme cold that can progress rapidly if ill-equipped. To prevent these conditions, which could result in death or permanent damage, do the following:

- Select **proper clothing** for cold, wet and windy conditions
- **Layer clothing** when possible, and be sure to include layers that repel moisture away from the skin
- Take frequent, short **breaks in warm, dry shelters** when possible
- **Avoid over-exhausting** yourself, as the body needs this energy to keep the muscles warm
- Plan to **work in pairs** when it's cold to share the load and watch for warning signs of frostbite or hypothermia
- When you know you will be exposed to extreme cold, prepare yourself **warm, sweet beverages** to drink – **avoid drinks containing caffeine or alcohol**
- Prepare **warm, high-calorie foods** to consume if you know you will be outside for long periods of time

## Other Winter Storm Hazards to Be Prepared For

- Adverse driving conditions such as low visibility and slippery roadways
- Slips and falls on icy walkways or from heights
- Being struck while walking or in your vehicle by falling objects like icicles, tree limbs and utility poles
- Electrocution due to downed power lines or downed objects in contact with power lines
- Roof collapses under weight of snow or flooding from melting snow
- Exhaustion, dehydration and back injuries from conducting manual labor in the snow