

Winter Storms
March 2007

- **Conserve fuel.** Winter storms can last for several days. Great demand may be placed on electric, gas, and other fuel distribution systems (fuel oil, propane, etc.). Suppliers of propane and fuel oil may not be able to replenish depleted supplies during severe weather. Electric and gas services may be temporarily disrupted when many people demand large amounts at the same time. Lower the thermostat to 65° F (18° C) during the day and to 55° F (13° C) at night. Close off unused rooms, and stuff towels or rags in cracks under the doors. Cover the windows at night.
- **If you must go outside, protect yourself from winter storm hazards:**
 - Wear layered clothing, mittens or gloves, and a hat.** Layered clothing will keep you warmer than a single, heavy coat. Outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent. Mittens or gloves and a hat will prevent the loss of body heat. Mittens are warmer than gloves because your fingers maintain more warmth when they touch each other. Half of your body-heat loss is from your head.
 - Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from severely cold air.** Avoid taking deep breaths; minimize talking.
 - Watch for signs of hypothermia and frostbite.** (See Appendix: Frostbite and Hypothermia.)
 - Keep dry.** Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses much of its insulating value and transmits heat rapidly away from the body.
 - Stretch before you go out.** If you go out to shovel snow, do a few stretching exercises to warm up your body. This will reduce your chances of muscle injury.
 - Avoid overexertion,** such as shoveling heavy snow, pushing a vehicle, or walking in deep snow. The strain from the cold and the hard labor may cause a heart attack. Sweating could lead to a chill and hypothermia.
- **Walk carefully on snowy, icy sidewalks.** Slips and falls occur frequently in winter weather, resulting in painful and sometimes disabling injuries.
- **If you must go out during a winter storm, use public transportation if possible.** About 70 percent of winter deaths related to ice and snow occur in automobiles.
- **Check on relatives, neighbors, and friends, particularly if they are elderly or if they live alone.**

Driving in Winter Conditions

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- Winterize your vehicle and stock it with emergency supplies.
- Avoid driving in a winter storm.
- If stranded, stay with the vehicle and keep warm.

You should:

- **Have your vehicle winterized** before the winter storm season. Keeping your vehicle in good condition will decrease your chance of being stranded in cold weather. Have a mechanic check your battery, antifreeze, wipers and windshield washer fluid, ignition system, thermostat, lights, flashing hazard lights, exhaust system, heater, brakes, defroster, and oil level. If necessary, replace existing oil with winter-grade oil. Install good winter tires. Make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. However, some jurisdictions require that vehicles on their roads be equipped with chains or snow tires with studs.