

Media and Community Education Ideas

- Sponsor a "Winter Weather Awareness Day" a week or so before winter storm season begins. This is a good way to get emergency management officials and local Red Cross representatives involved.
- Ask your local newspaper or radio or television station to:
 - Do a series on the dangers of winter storms and severe cold, with special emphasis on what people should do if they are caught out in the open or in a vehicle.
 - Highlight the importance of staying informed about local weather conditions.
 - Run public service ads about how to protect lives in winter storms and extreme cold.Help the reporters to localize the information by providing them with the local emergency telephone number for the fire, police, and emergency medical services departments (usually 9-1-1) and emergency numbers for the local utilities and hospitals. Also provide business telephone numbers for the local emergency management office and American Red Cross chapter.
- Inform your community about the different National Weather Service announcements—winter storm outlook, winter storm watch, winter storm warning, blizzard warning, winter weather advisory.
- In the fall, present information sessions about safe practices for the coming season of cold weather and winter storms. Include information on alternative heat sources and home insulation.
- Interview local physicians about the dangers of hypothermia and other winter health conditions. Include discussions of exhaustion and heart attacks caused by overexertion.
- Advise people of the dangers of winter driving, and warn them that driving in winter storms can be a risk to their lives. Produce a series of announcements on what people should do if they are stuck in a vehicle during a blizzard.

Facts and Fiction

Fiction: If you are stuck in a car in a snowstorm, the best thing to do is to get out and look for help.

Facts: You should stay in your vehicle and wait for rescuers. If you leave your vehicle in wind-driven snow, you could quickly become disoriented. Make the vehicle visible to rescuers (tie a colored cloth to the antenna or door, turn on the dome light when running the engine for heat, raise the hood when the snow stops falling). If you have a cell phone, call a towing company or 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.

Fiction: In severe cold, it is best to stay warm by wearing a very heavy coat.

Facts: You should wear loose, lightweight, warm clothes in layers. Trapped air insulates. Remove layers to avoid perspiration and subsequent chill. Outer garments should be tightly woven, water repellent, and hooded. Wear a hat. Half your body-heat loss can be from the head. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from extreme cold. Mittens, snug at the wrist, are better than gloves. Try to stay dry.