

JANUARY 2017

# Prepare for Winter Weather

Winter storms can range from moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard that lasts for several days. Planning and preparing for a storm can help you to keep your family safe.

## Emergency Supplies

Assemble your emergency supplies. Basic emergency supplies should include water (at least one gallon of water per person per day), food (at least 3-day supply), flashlight, radio, cell phone charger, first aid kit, and extra blankets or sleeping bags.

## Protect Your Home

Keep fire extinguishers handy and make sure everyone in your family knows how to use them. Replace smoke detector batteries at least once a year. Insulate water pipes with insulation or newspaper and plastic. Learn how to shut off water valves if a pipe bursts. Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected yearly.

## Carbon Monoxide

Install battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors in order to warn you about accumulating carbon monoxide, which is a potentially deadly gas that is odorless, colorless, and tasteless. Do not use generators, grills, camp stoves, or charcoal burning devices inside. If a carbon monoxide detector alarm sounds, move quickly to fresh air outside or open windows and doors. Call for help and remain outside until emergency personnel arrive.

## Snow Shoveling

Snow shoveling can be hazardous. About 10,000 people visit emergency rooms each year due to overexertion and injury from snow shoveling. These injuries include strains, cuts, and fractures from slips and falls. Nearly 100 people die each year from heart attacks. Use caution, take breaks, and lift lighter loads.



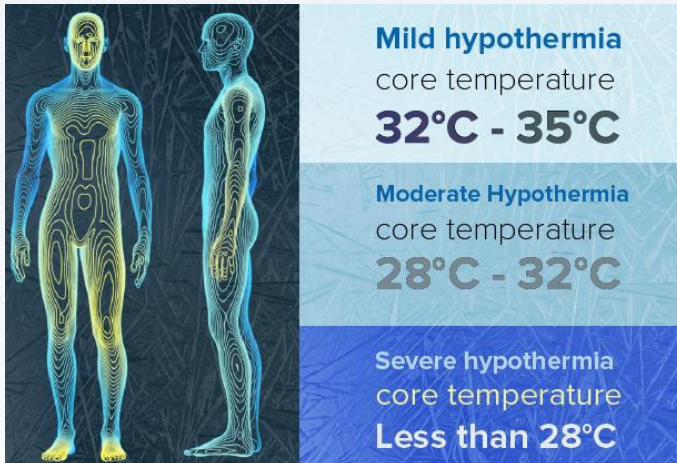
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## Stay off the Road

Driving during or immediately after a winter storm is very dangerous. Make plans to stay off the road when advisories and watches are issued. If driving is necessary, make sure you have warm clothes with you as well as food, water, and a full tank of gas. Try not to travel alone and do it during the day. Stay on main roads. Let your family members or friends know your route, destination, and expected arrival time.



## Hypothermia



Hypothermia is a medical emergency that occurs when your body loses heat faster than it can produce it, causing a dangerously low body temperature. Normal body temperature is around 98.6F (37C). Hypothermia occurs as your body temperature passes below 95F (35C). Signs of hypothermia include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech and drowsiness. If symptoms of hypothermia are detected get the person to a warm location and remove wet clothing. Warm the center of the body by wrapping blankets around and give him/her warm non-alcoholic beverage. If person's temperature is below 95F, seek medical attention immediately.

### References:

How to Prepare for a Winter Storm. [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare)  
Hypothermia. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hypothermia>

