



Bastrop County Office of Emergency Management

PUBLIC SAFETY, PUBLIC TRUST

TIPS & **R**EMINDERS

It's Going to Get Freezing Cold: Are You Ready?

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for more on mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery



It's coming....Those days of hot chocolate in front of the fireplace or hunkering down on the couch under warm blankets with the pups watching that favorite Hallmark movie.

But somewhere in between, those cool days can turn to bone-chilling ones. Ranchers could find themselves busting ice from water troughs for their livestock while tree branches loaded with ice could snap causing electric lines to fall.

So, take the time now, **TO BE READY. TO BE PREPARED.** The aftermath of a severe winter weather storm can create havoc and even destruction as we have seen in the past several years.



During these mild days of December, make your house winter ready. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) suggests these items to include on your **house preparedness checklist**:

- Clean gutters.
- Have your chimney inspected and cleaned if necessary.
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows.
- Insulate attics and exposed pipes.
- Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

Remember, that neighbors and those most vulnerable may need your help with these tasks.

Moving indoors, if you already have **supplies for those days of sheltering in place** when travel is too dangerous and non-essential, take time to do the following:

- Check expiration dates on non-perishable food and medications. Replenish if necessary. Remember, a 72-hour supply of food, water and medication is recommended for every household member.
- Don't forget a manual can opener and a phone power bank in case the electricity is interrupted.

On those days being bound to the house without electricity, temperatures can easily become uncomfortable. But, **there are simple things you can do to tolerate low indoor temperatures.**

- Stay physically active.
- Dress in extra layers of clothing along with a hat, gloves, and shoes.
- Have extra blankets to bundle up in.
- Open curtains for the natural warmth of the sunshine.

Never attempt to warm a room with candles, stovetop burners, an open oven door or any other fire hazard. Space heaters are convenient, but they, too, can pose a fire threat if not used properly.

When **using space heaters, follow these guidelines** set out by the National Weather Service (NWS):

- Place the heater level on a nonflammable surface. Make sure this area is a KID FREE ZONE.
- Plug the heater directly into a wall outlet allowing at least a 3-foot radius.
- Don't leave the heater running while away or while sleeping.



Portable generators can be an excellent power source, especially when electricity is interrupted. But the Texas Department of Insurance reminds us to follow instructions provided with the **portable generator** to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, the silent killer. Other **reminders** include the following:

- Only add fuel to a cool generator.
- Position the generator outdoors at least 20 feet away from doors, windows, and garages.
- Plug appliances into your generator using a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord. Do not use cords with cuts, tears or missing prongs.

With safe, proactive actions taken to prepare our home and those who live there, we cannot forget taking care of **pets and livestock**. Just like us humans, they, too, need these things:

- Warm shelter away from drafts
- Accessible, fresh water
- Plenty of feed

And, there are some instances, such as emergencies or essential work, when people must travel on roads slick with rain and ice. **Make travel safe as possible** in these ways:

- Keep vehicles well-maintained with reliable tires.
- Maintain proper fluid levels.
- Have a full tank of gas.
- Travel with an emergency kit of necessities in case of delay in travel.
- Buckle up, slow down and maintain ample travel distance from other vehicles for a safe trip.
- Monitor road conditions at <https://drivetexas.org/>.

During these winter months, remember the 4Ps: People, Pets, Pipes and Plants.

To learn more about “Why You Should Be #WinterReady,” visit <https://www.ready.gov/winter-ready>.

