

FEMA Provides Safety Guidance as Winter Storm Sweeps Across the Central and Southeast U.S.

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WASHINGTON – FEMA is providing safety guidance as severe weather and winter storms continue to affect the central and southeastern regions of the U.S.

FEMA urges people to pay attention to local officials and take any necessary actions to keep safe as these severe weather effects continue to move across the nation. Sixty-three percent of temperature-related deaths are related to the effects of cold exposure, while home heating is the second leading cause of home fires. There are several unique risks that can be addressed by following the winter safety tips below:

- **Sign up for emergency alerts from your state and local public safety officials.** Download the [FEMA App](#) to receive real-time weather and emergency alerts for up to five different areas nationwide, send notifications to loved ones, locate emergency shelters in your area, get preparedness strategies and more.
- **If you are planning to travel by car,** check your local weather and traffic reports before heading out. Tell others your route and anticipated arrival time. If your roads are not in good shape, consider postponing non-essential travel until the roads are cleared. When driving, increase your following distance to other vehicles from 3-4 seconds to 5-6 seconds and watch for icy conditions on bridges and overpasses. It takes longer to slow down on icy roads. Make sure you have your auto insurance provider and a towing company number in a place that's accessible.
- **Call 211** for information related to warming centers and safety resources in your area.
- **Power outages** can impact communications, transportation, utilities and much more. If experiencing an outage, keep freezers and refrigerators closed. Disconnect appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges.



- **Prevent house heating fires** by keeping anything that can burn at least three feet from all heat sources including fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators, portable heaters or candles. Always plug space heaters directly into an outlet and make sure its cord isn't damaged.
- **Never use generators indoors** or use a gas stove or oven to heat your home. Doing so can put you at risk for carbon monoxide poisoning.

Visit ready.gov/winter-ready or ready.gov/es/winter-ready (Spanish) for more information on how you, your family and community can stay safe from the effects of extreme cold weather and winter storms.

