

# Stay One Step Ahead of the Cold – Be Prepared for Winter’s Worst

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**PHILADELPHIA** – As the holiday season approaches and winter takes hold, it’s important to be prepared for extreme cold and unpredictable weather. FEMA Region 3 is encouraging individuals and communities to embrace winter weather safety with the same care and attention they give to their seasonal celebrations.

The winter holidays bring joy and togetherness, but preparing for them can also present unique challenges, from icy roads to severe cold spells. “I encourage everyone to incorporate preparedness steps into the planning you are already doing for the holidays,” said FEMA Region 3 Regional Administrator MaryAnn Tierney. “Personally, as I shop for my holiday groceries and gifts this year, I will be adding snacks, a lantern, and batteries to my list so my family is more prepared if we lose power in a storm.”

To help ensure a safe and memorable holiday season, here are key steps you can take to stay winter-ready and protect yourself, your family, and your home from the elements.

1. **Know Your Risk:** Know the winter weather risks in your area. Pay attention to weather reports and storm warnings to prevent cold weather casualties and to stop the spread of illnesses like hypothermia, frostbite, flu & COVID-19.
2. **Create a Winter Emergency Kit:** Be prepared for winter weather at home, at work and on the go. Create an emergency supply kit for your car. Include jumper cables, sand, a flashlight, warm clothes, blankets, bottled water and non-perishable snacks. Keep a full tank of gas.
3. **Develop an Emergency Plan:** Establish a clear and concise communications plan with your loved ones so you know how to get in touch in an emergency. Before a winter storm or drop in temperatures, check in on your neighbors and friends, especially older adults or others who may have unique needs, to help them prepare.



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4. **Pay Attention and Stay Informed:** Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System and National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
5. **Prepare Your Home:** Winterize your home by insulating pipes, sealing drafts, and checking heating systems. Home heating is the second leading cause of home fires, and winter is when most home fires occur. Ensure that heating sources are in good working condition. Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups. Taking these precautions can prevent emergencies and ensure a warm and safe living environment.
6. **Prepare to Travel Safe:** If you must travel in bad weather, exercise extra caution on the road. Slowing down and stopping on icy surfaces takes more time, so extend your following distance to 5-6 seconds instead of the usual 3-4. Always carry a winter emergency kit in your vehicle and stay informed about current road conditions.

As you're preparing this winter, follow along with FEMA's [#WinterReady campaign](#) and FEMA Region 3 on X, LinkedIn, and Nextdoor, as we share more preparedness tips and resources.

Whether you're on the road, at home by the fire, or gathered with family and friends, it's never a bad time to receive more preparedness tips on how to stay safe. Tune into the first episode of the ***Preparedness in Your Pocket*** podcast, hosted by the Maryland Emergency Preparedness Network and featuring a guest from FEMA Region 3. With winter weather rolling into our region, it couldn't be a better time to talk about the importance of weather alerts. In this episode, you'll learn about how respond to different alerts, why they matter, how you can customize alerts for your needs, and practical tips and resources that you can use to stay informed throughout the season.

This podcast is currently available on [Spotify](#) and [YouTube](#) and will be soon made available on all streaming platforms.

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*FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters. FEMA Region 3's jurisdiction includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.*



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