

WINTER WEATHER SURVIVAL

Make sure your family and home are ready in case severe weather strikes. Knowing safety tips and having severe weather plans in place are the best ways to prepare.

DEFINITIONS:

Watch – means a “chance” this condition will happen and usually covers a large geographical area for a lengthy time period.

Advisory – is sort of in between a WATCH and a WARNING. The expected weather condition has a pretty good chance of occurring, even a likely chance of occurring, but typically an advisory is used for “less” severe type of weather conditions. A Wind Advisory might be issued or a Freezing Rain Advisory issued instead of a High Wind Warning or an Ice Storm Warning.

Warning – means the said weather is already occurring or is likely to occur and to take proper protective measures. Warnings are usually issued for much smaller geographical areas and usually for shorter, more definite time periods.



DRIVING IN WINTER WEATHER



AAA recommends several tips for driving in bad weather, and they all have a common theme: be slow. Stop and start slowly, including getting up to speed. Slowly applying the gas will help you gain traction better. Give yourself a long time to slow down for stop signs or stop lights, and leave a lot of room between you and the car ahead of you — AAA recommends leaving about 8-10 seconds between you and the car ahead of you. Also, try to avoid coming to complete stops, particularly before attempting to drive up a hill. Inertia is your friend when the roads are slippery and snow-covered — just make sure it's safe, slow inertia. Make sure to remember that, if at all possible, a warm couch and a good book are preferable to a cold ditch and snow-covered boots.

SURVIVING AN ICE STORM

If you're caught driving during an ice storm, carefully and slowly proceed to your destination. At home, take care that you have tree-trimming professionals keep your electrical lines free from tree limbs and brush. Your food can go into crates and containers and be placed outside.



WHAT TO KEEP IN YOUR CAR



Keep an emergency kit with blankets, gloves, hats, energy-rich food such as beef jerky or granola bars, water and any needed medication. Inexpensive handwarmers are good in a pinch. A fully-charged cell phone with a local tow truck's number is helpful. Flares will help rescuers see you, and a wind-up radio and flashlight will allow you to listen to the weather and have light even if you have no electricity. Some wind-up flashlights have a blinking red emergency setting. A well-stocked first-aid kit is also valuable. A bag of sand and cat litter adds ballast to your vehicle and provides traction if you're in a slippery spot.

STRANDED IN YOUR CAR

In December 2013, a family whose Jeep overturned in the Nevada mountains wisely thought to stay with their vehicle, making it easier for rescuers to find them. They also thought to heat rocks in a fire, then place the heated rocks in the Jeep's spare tire to smokelessly heat their vehicle, preventing frostbite to the couple and their 4 small children. Authorities attribute the Nevada family's survival to the fact that they stayed with their car. The car gives authorities a big target to search for. AAA recommends tying a brightly-colored cloth to your antennae and keeping a dome light on at night if possible. Make sure your exhaust pipe is clear so that carbon monoxide doesn't creep into your vehicle. To avoid being stranded to begin with, monitor weather conditions along your route, invest in winter tires, and keep your gas tank at least half full.



ICE SAFETY

Know the weather and ice conditions, where you're going and how to call for help. Know the ice depths of inland lakes, where currents are predominant and where river mouths enter — currents and rivers can cause weak ice. If you're fishing on iced-over Great Lakes bays, know the wind direction. The Coast Guard has rescued hundreds of people who get caught on ice floes, which can float out to the vast lakes if the wind changes direction.

UW-Madison Police Department's Emergency Management Unit offers additional safety information via our website:

<http://uwpd.wisc.edu>



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