

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



PREPARING FOR WINTER HAZARDS EXTREME COLD, BLIZZARDS, AND ICE STORMS

Exposure to extreme cold, blizzards, and ice storms can cause frostbite, hypothermia, and even death. Additionally, winter events such as blizzards and ice storms can cause car accidents, power outages, carbon monoxide poisoning, and home fires. This document will provide helpful tips for staying warm and safe during the winter.

What is the difference between hypothermia and frostbite?

Illness	Symptoms	Treatment
Hypothermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, slurred speech, fumbling hands. Slow breathing and heart rate Drowsiness or loss of consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move to a warm, dry place Remove wet clothing Wrap in blankets or sleeping bag Warm the center of the body first (chest, neck, head, groin) Give warm, non-alcoholic beverages if conscious Seek medical help immediately
Frostbite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbness, tingling, or stinging Skin looks white, grayish-yellow, or bluish Skin feels unusually firm or waxy In severe cases: blisters or blackened skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move to a warm environment. Warm the affected area gently using body heat or warm (not hot) water Do not rub or massage the area Avoid walking on frostbitten feet/toes Seek medical attention as soon as possible

If you have any questions
please contact
wildfires@metis.org



Otipemisiwak
Métis Government

Environment and Climate Change
780-455-2200 • 1-817-454-0684 • wildfires@metis.org

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How can I prepare for winter events and conditions?

Always check your local weather news to see if an extreme cold event will occur in your community. As well, prepare your home and car for the winter, and ensure you wear layers when going outside. Stay indoors if possible and wear proper clothing if you must go inside. Lastly, do not overexert yourself in the cold, and watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

What should I do to get my home winter ready?

- ∞ Regularly maintain your home before the cold weather starts. Make sure your heating system is working efficiently.
- ∞ Install carbon monoxide alarms, and make sure they are working correctly.
- ∞ Consider installing a backup heat source in case of a power outage. You can also get a backup generator.
- ∞ Home heating is the second leading cause of home fires, and they usually occur during the winter ready.gov/winter-ready. Keep anything that can burn at least three feet from all heating sources, including fireplaces, wood stoves, portable heaters, or candles. Never use an oven to heat your home, and always plug space heaters directly into an outlet and ensure the cord is not frayed.
- ∞ Prepare for a power outage, and learn more about how to stay safe during a power outage albertammetis.comEmergencyPreparednessPowerOutages



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What should I do to get my car winter ready?

Create a vehicle emergency kit for your car. Make sure to add jumper cables, a blanket, extra clothing (toque and gloves), a flashlight, and other necessary items in case you get stranded. Keep an extra phone charger in your car so you can call for help. Ensure you change to winter tires before it starts to snow. As well, consider doing a vehicle check of your battery, brakes, heating system, exhaust system, and windshield wipers. Finally, make sure to fill up your gas tank when periods of extreme cold are forecast.



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Please note: Before you travel, check [Alberta 511](#) for current road conditions to help you arrive at your destination safely. For weather alert notices for your area and other locations, see [WeatherCAN](#). 211 if someone is in distress or an unsafe place.

How should I stay safe during an extreme cold, blizzard, or freezing rain event?

- ∞ **Stay informed.** Check the weather forecast and road conditions before going out.
- ∞ **Stay home if possible.** Avoid unnecessary travel during blizzards and freezing rain.
- ∞ **If you must go out, dress warmly.** Wear layers, a toque, mitts/gloves, and warm boots. Take breaks and avoid overexertion when shoveling.
- ∞ **Prepare your vehicle.** Ensure the brakes, lights, battery, windshield wipers, and winter tires are in good condition. Carry an emergency kit with jumper cables, blankets, extra clothing, a phone charger, and food/water.
- ∞ **Plan ahead when travelling.** Leave earlier than usual to account for slower driving conditions.
- ∞ **Share your plans.** Let someone know your departure time, route, and expected arrival time.



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