



Snowstorms and Extreme Cold

The National Weather Service (NWS) refers to winter storms as the "deceptive killers" because most deaths are actually indirectly related to storms. People are injured or killed in traffic accidents on icy roads, or suffer from hypothermia due to prolonged exposure to the cold. Another major danger associated with winter storms is their ability to knock out heat, power, and communications, sometimes for days at a time.



Winter Preparation

- Ensure you have sufficient heating fuel. You may become isolated in your home and regular fuel sources may be cut off. If you have a fireplace or wood burning stove, store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood.
- Make certain you have adequate clothing and blankets to keep warm.
- Make a family communications plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together, and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather.
- If you will be going away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55°F.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Snowstorms and Extreme Cold
- Winter Weather Terminology
- AlertPA and 511PA
- ReadyPA Tip Sheet: Winter Weather Checklist



During Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

- Stay indoors during the storm.
- Maintain ventilation when using portable kerosene and gas heaters to avoid build-up of toxic fumes. Refuel portable heaters outside and keep them at least three feet from flammable objects.
- Dress for the weather.
 - If you must go outside, wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.
 - Wear mittens, which can be warmer than gloves.
 - Wear a hat. A hat will prevent loss of body heat.
 - Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy, walkways.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow.



Winter Weather Terminology

In order to be better prepared, it is important to become familiar with terms used to report winter weather events. Knowing the below terms will enable you to take the necessary precautions to protect you and your family.

Be Informed

Winter Weather Advisory	Issued for accumulations of snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and sleet which will cause significant inconveniences and, if caution is not exercised, could be life-threatening.
Winter Storm Outlook	Issued prior to a Winter Storm Watch. The Outlook is given when forecasters believe winter storm conditions are possible, usually 3 to 5 days in advance of a winter storm.
Winter Storm Watch	Alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before a storm begins.
Winter Storm Warning	Issued when hazardous winter weather (i.e. heavy snow, heavy freezing rain or sleet) is imminent or occurring. Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before a storm begins.
Blizzard Warning	Issued for sustained or gusty winds of 35 mph or more and falling or blowing snow creating visibilities at or below $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, lasting at least three hours.
Wind Chill Advisory	Issued when wind chill temperatures are expected to be a significant inconvenience to life with prolonged exposure.
Wind Chill Warning	Issued when wind chill temperatures are expected to be hazardous to life within several minutes of exposure.
Snow Flurries	Light snow falling for short durations. No accumulation or light dusting is all that is expected.
Snow Showers	Snow falling at varying intensities for brief periods of time. Some accumulation is possible.
Snow Squalls	Brief, intense snow showers accompanied by strong, gusty winds. Accumulation may be significant. Snow squalls are significant life-safety hazards while driving.
Blowing Snow	Wind-driven snow that reduces visibility and causes significant drifting. Blowing snow may be snow that is falling and/or loose snow on the ground picked up by the wind.
Sleet	Rain drops that freeze into ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet usually bounces when hitting a surface and does not stick to objects, but can accumulate like snow.
Freezing Rain	Rain that falls onto a surface with a temperature below freezing. This rain then freezes on contact with surfaces, such as trees, cars, and roads, forming a coating or glaze of ice. Small accumulations of ice can cause a significant hazard.

Join AlertPA



Join AlertPA, (<https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/BF5CCF5B2AB3>) the commonwealth's notification system by CodeRED, for emergency and weather related alerts, health notifications, building alerts, and other updates from commonwealth and federal agencies. A CodeRED Weather Warning will automatically alert you if your address falls in the path of severe weather, as determined by NWS.

Log into 511PA



511PA (<https://www.511pa.com/>) can send email to travelers who sign up for Personal Travel Alerts, and lets you tailor your notifications for all roadways on the 511PA core network. It is easy to sign up and tailor your alerts to only those roadways in which you're interested. Don't want alerts on weekends? No problem. You can specify that you only want email alerts on weekdays. Only want email alerts before you start your daily commute? Just say what time of day you'd like them to start and end.

PEMA is Social!

Find us, visit us, like us, tweet us, retweet us!



Twitter

<https://twitter.com/ReadyPA>

<https://twitter.com/PEMAdirector>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/BeReadyPA>

PEMA Can Also be Found on the Web!

Be Informed, Be Prepared, and Be Involved!



www.Ready.PA.gov



pennsylvania

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

www.pema.pa.gov

This Month's Preparedness Events

American Heart Month

(<https://health.gov/news/announcements/2018/01/toolkit-american-heart-month-2/>)

Additional Resources

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency: www.pema.pa.gov

ReadyPA: www.Ready.PA.gov

SERVPA: www.Serv.PA.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov

Office of the State Fire Commissioner: www.osfc.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services: www.dhs.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Department of Health: www.health.pa.gov

PA State Animal Response Team: www.pasart.us

PA Department of Transportation: www.penndot.gov

PA511Connect: www.511pa.com

Pennsylvania State Police: www.psp.pa.gov

Winter Weather Checklist



Maintain heating equipment with annual cleanings



Insulate your home by installing Storm Windows or adding Plastic covering

Dress in several layers of lightweight clothing



Wear waterproof boots to keep warm and dry and maintain your footing



Bring pets indoors during winter



Avoid black ice on the roads by looking for a slight sheen on the surface of the road



Listen to the news or the national weather service for critical info