

## Extreme Cold Advisory and Safety Tips

With more extreme cold forecast for the coming days, please review these extreme cold safety tips and check on neighbors or family members who may need assistance.

### Before the cold comes

- Make sure your heating system is working and you have enough heating fuel.
- Know where your electricity, gas, and water switches and valves are located and how to shut them off. You may need to turn off water pipes if your pipes freeze or burst.
- If possible, consider having a safe backup like a fireplace, wood stove, or space heater in case your heat goes out.
- If you will be using an extension cord for a space heater, make sure it is rated for the appliance.
- Check that your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working and have fresh batteries.
- Make sure your vehicle's gas tank is at least half full and pack an emergency kit that includes blankets and/or warm clothing.

### During extreme cold

- Try to minimize time outside, even for pets.
- If you do need to go outside, dress in several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing. Outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent. Wear a hat, mittens (not gloves), and sturdy waterproof boots to protect your extremities. Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.
- Follow all safety precautions if using space heaters and DO NOT use a stove or oven as a heat source.
  - Do not use space heaters as a primary heat source.
  - Make sure space heaters are turned off when you go to bed or leave the house.
  - Keep anything that could burn at least three feet from space heaters. Keep in mind that drying Christmas trees can pose a fire hazard and space heaters should not be used near them.
- Wrap pipes in insulation or layers of newspapers covered in plastic to prevent them from freezing. Opening kitchen and bathroom cupboards can help heat circulate around pipes but make sure any cleaners or other household chemicals are moved out of reach of children. Let a trickle of warm water run from a faucet to keep water moving through your pipes and keep your home heated to at least 55 degrees.
- If your pipes freeze, remove any insulation, pour hot water over them or wrap them with towels soaked in hot water, and completely open all faucets. You can also use a hair dryer, with caution, to thaw pipes. Never use an open flame to thaw pipes. If you cannot locate or resolve a frozen pipe, call a licensed plumber.
- If you need to let your car warm up before getting on the road, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it to avoid the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If you park outside, check your car tailpipe before you start your car to make sure the tailpipe is not blocked with snow or ice.
- Check on neighbors and family, especially the elderly and infirmed.
- Watch for signs of cold-related health concerns like frostbite and hypothermia and call 911 immediately for any emergencies.

You can find more information on staying safe during extreme cold at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/emergencies/cold/>

<https://www.safekids.org/blog/winter-coming-cold-weather-safety-checklist>

<https://www.cdc.gov/Features/WinterWeather/>