



**WINTER WEATHER
PREPAREDNESS**

*Winter Weather
Preparedness
And
Safety Guide
(2025-26)*



Introduction

The Morton County Office of Emergency Management publishes this guide with the intent this information will be helpful for the safety of the residents of Morton County. The goal of *“Winter Weather Preparedness”* is to inform Morton County residents on how to prepare for and stay safe in response to threatening winter weather conditions. We appreciate your efforts to help share this awareness and lifesaving information with your family and friends. Please feel free to photocopy and distribute the information included in this guide.

This guide contains vital safety information and severe/hazardous winter weather terms. This information is intended to prompt Morton County citizens to assess and evaluate their preparedness plans for your home, school, work and during recreational activities.

This preparedness guide explains the threats and dangers of winter weather and suggests life-saving actions **YOU** and family members can take this winter. With this information, **YOU** can better recognize winter weather threats, develop an action plan and be ready when severe winter weather threatens. Remember...your personal safety is up to **YOU**.

The information contained in this guide is a compilation of public safety information published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the American Red Cross, the National Weather Service and Centers for Disease Control. To find additional materials on winter safety, try the following Web sites:

National Weather Service: www.weather.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov

American Red Cross: www.redcross.org

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Being Aware and Being Prepared

Did You Know?

Winter Storms are considered *Deceptive Killers* because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. Everyone is potentially at risk during winter storms. The actual threat to YOU depends on your specific situation. Recent statistics indicate the following are related to the cause of winter deaths:

Related to ice and snow:

- About 70% occur in vehicles
- About 25% are people caught in the storm

Related to exposure to cold:

- 50% happens to people over 60 years old
- Over 75% happen to males
- About 20% occur in the home

Winter storms, especially blizzards, can be very dangerous. Preparing before extremely cold, snowy weather events can save your life. Become familiar and know what winter weather advisories, watches and warnings mean. Stay informed by listening to local radio, television and National Weather Service announcements. If you must travel or are traveling during winter storm conditions, call 511 for ND state road reports or visit the ND Department of Transportation, ND Travel Information Map for current road conditions at this Website:

travel.dot.nd.gov

See Page 4 of this guide for information on the ND Roads Mobile Travel App

Stay indoors during a blizzard. If you must go outside to check on animals or for any other reason, be sure to dress warmly in loose fitting layers of clothing. Cover your mouth so that you don't breathe in freezing cold air that can damage your lungs. Keep your body dry. Know the signs of hypothermia or frostbite (see page 10 of this guide). The biggest threat during blizzard conditions is becoming disoriented and lost due to limited visibility.

Winter weather related dangers can be very unexpected. Being *aware* and being *prepared* for a potential hazardous situation could save your life.



Getting to Know Winter Weather Terms

Let's become familiar with the National Weather Service (NWS) terms that are frequently used in winter weather forecasts. If you are in the alerted area, check your TV or listen to your local radio station or a weather radio for the latest information. Most local news media stations now offer downloadable software applications for up-to-date email alerts on your mobile phone/tablet. Knowing these key weather terms enables you to take the necessary precautionary measures.

OUTLOOK

Winter Storm Outlook—Issued 3 to 5 days prior to a Winter Storm. The Outlook is given when weather forecasters believe winter storm conditions are possible.

ADVISORIES—Advance warning for a less serious weather event with little impact.

Cold Weather Advisory—Issued for wind chills of 30 to 39 below zero.

Winter Weather Advisories—Issued for combination events (snow with freezing rain or sleet, or snow with wind and blowing snow) when **warning** criteria is not expected to be met. Generally Winter Weather Advisories are issued for 3–5 inches of snow. Also issued for freezing rain when an accumulation of ice up to 1/4 inch is expected.

Dense Fog Advisory—Issued when wide-spread fog will reduce visibility to 1/4 mile or less.

Wind Advisory—Issued when sustained winds of 30 mph or greater are expected to last one hour or longer or wind gusts up to 55 mph.

WATCH—Possible weather events that **could** be a threat to life and property.

Winter Storm Watch—Alerts the public to the possibility of heavy snow, a blizzard, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Watches are usually issued 24 to 72 hours before the beginning of a storm. Conditions are possible but not imminent.

WARNINGS

Ice Storm Warning—Heavy ice accumulations (1/4 inch thick or more) will cause extremely dangerous and damaging situations, such as extremely icy roads, downed tree limbs and power lines.

Snow Squall Warning—Issued when short-term blizzard conditions are ongoing or imminent in a localized area. An intense burst of snow with wind gusts of 45 mph or higher and visibility consistently 1/4 mile or less (whiteout conditions) for 30 to 60 minutes.

Winter Storm Warning—Issued when a combination of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain or heavy sleet is expected to occur. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 36 hours before the event is expected to begin. Heavy snow constitutes 6 inches or more of snow over a period of less than 48 hours.

Blizzard Warning—Issued for sustained or gusty winds of 35 mph or more, with falling or blowing snow reducing visibility to less than 1/4 mile. These conditions should persist for at least 3 hours.

Extreme Cold Warning—Issued for wind chills of 40 below zero or colder.

Stay Informed with Hyper-Reach Alerts



What is Hyper-Reach?

Hyper-Reach is Morton County's new web-based critical communication system that allows local public safety personnel to notify residents and businesses of time-sensitive information, emergencies, or urgent notifications. Alerts can be sent via telephone, text message, email, and digital devices. The system can reach thousands of residents within minutes to ensure critical information – such as evacuation or shelter-in-place notices, missing person alerts, and local severe weather information – is delivered quickly.

Only authorized public safety officials can send alerts through Hyper-Reach.

Starting November 1, 2025, Morton County will begin transitioning from CodeRED to Hyper-Reach for mobile alerts.

How do I sign up?

You can sign up for Hyper-Reach alerts using the links below, or by calling the Morton County Emergency Management office at (701) 667-3307 for assistance.

Morton County Webpage: mortonnd.gov/hyperreach

Morton County Hyper-Reach Webpage: <https://hyper-reach.com/ndmortonsignup.html>

Sign-up by Phone: (701) 498-1770

IMPORTANT: After signing up, please save the following phone number in your mobile contacts so you'll recognize incoming Hyper-Reach calls:

Caller ID: MORTON CO EMERG

Phone Number: (701) 975-5333



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

If I'm already signed up for CodeRED alerts, do I need to register for Hyper-Reach?

Yes. Hyper-Reach is a new alert system that replaces CodeRED for Morton County notifications. Even if you were previously signed up for CodeRED, you will need to register for Hyper-Reach to continue receiving important alerts. Registration is quick and easy!

When will Hyper-Reach be used?

Hyper-Reach is used to notify residents about situations impacting community safety. Alerts may include boil water notices, public works notices, gas leaks, evacuation instructions, police or fire emergencies, missing persons, severe weather, and more. You can customize which types of messages you want to receive and how you are contacted – phone call, text, email, mobile app, desktop, or Alexa device.

Why did I only get part of the message on my answering machine?

Some answering devices or voicemail systems may interrupt the message playback. If this happens, call (701) 975-5333 to receive the complete message.

Why did Hyper-Reach call me several times?

If a phone call isn't answered and there's no voicemail, Hyper-Reach will attempt the number up to 3 times to ensure the message is delivered.

Stay Informed & Travel Safely

NDDOT's Mobile Travel Information App – ND Roads. This App is intended for use by Apple/Android devices to view information that is relevant to the traveling public. The App allows you to access this information in both a map and text view. Winter travel information maps are updated 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM daily, typically from November through mid-April. Web site: www.dot.nd.gov/nddotmobile-apps

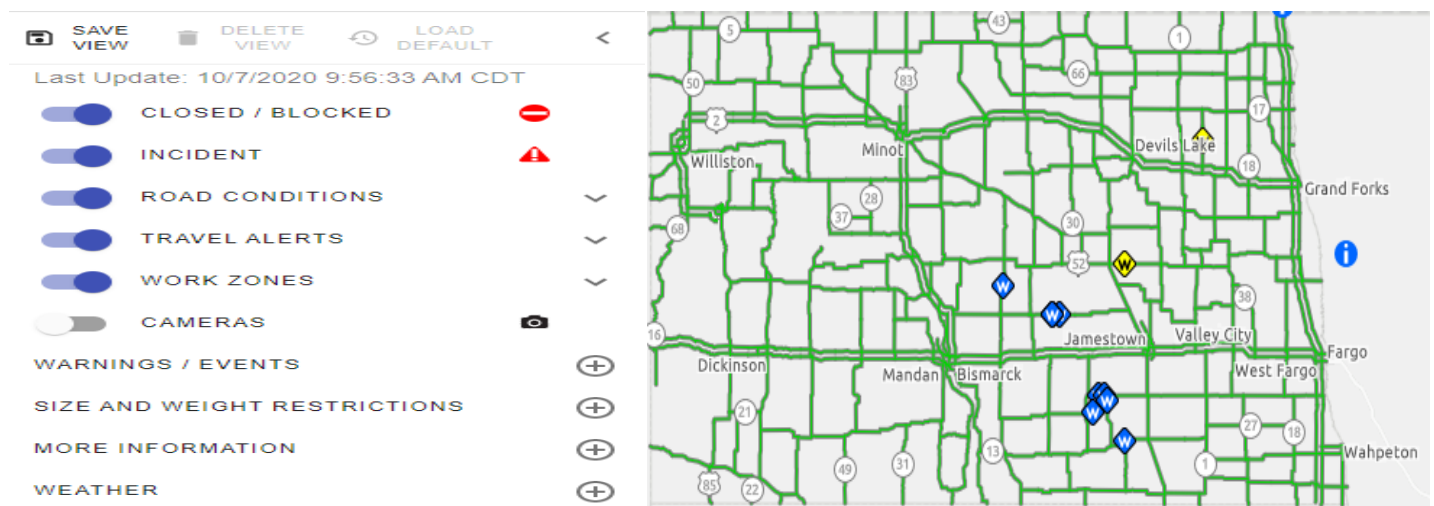


NDDOT's Mobile Travel Information App
Travel Conditions right at your fingertips

Download Options



The image below is what appears on your mobile device screen to navigate in the App



Key Features Include:

Road Conditions – Map that displays current road conditions across North Dakota

Cameras/Weather – Displays images of roadside cameras at specific locations throughout North Dakota highways

Closures/Incidents – Displays any road closures or incidents that alert the public of travel issues

Warning/Events – Displays any warnings (e.g. broken pavement, road flooding) for safety purposes

Road Conditions Terminology – These terms relate to winter road/travel conditions to keep the public well informed. The NDDOT will utilize these terms to inform the public that warrant increased awareness.

TRAVEL ALERT – Motorist can still travel but may encounter areas of challenging winter weather driving conditions on roadways. Motorists should allow extra time to reach their destination. A **TRAVEL ALERT** has the potential to change to a **NO TRAVEL ADVISED** if conditions deteriorate.

NO TRAVEL ADVISED – Motorists **should not travel** due to hazardous conditions which may make it unsafe to travel. Snow plows may be pulled from the roads during severe conditions. Motorists who choose to travel at their own risk may become stranded with no guarantee of first responder rescue.

ROADS CLOSED OR BLOCKED – Motorists are **not allowed** to travel on a closed road due to life threatening conditions. The road may be impassible or blocked. Motorists who drive past a road closure device may be fined up to \$250.

IPAWS – Integrated Public Alert and Warning System

What is IPAWS?

During an emergency, alert and warning officials need to provide the public with life-saving information quickly. The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) is a modernization and integration of the nation's alert and warning infrastructure and will save time when time matters most, protecting life and property.

Federal, State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial alerting authorities can use IPAWS and integrate local systems that use Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) standards with the IPAWS infrastructure. IPAWS provides public safety officials with an effective way to alert and warn the public about serious emergencies using the Emergency Alert System (EAS), Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio, and other public alerting systems from a single interface. Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), made available through the IPAWS infrastructure, are just one of the ways public safety officials can quickly and effectively alert and warn the public about serious emergencies.

What you need to know about Emergency Alert Systems (EASs)?

- The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is used by alerting authorities to send warnings via broadcast, cable, satellite, and wireline communications pathways.
- Emergency Alert System participants, who consist of broadcast, cable, satellite, and wireless providers, are the stewards of this important public service in close partnership with alerting officials at all levels of government.
- The EAS is also used when all other means of alerting the public are unavailable, providing an added layer of resiliency to the suite of available emergency communication tools.
- The EAS is in a constant state of improvement to ensure seamless integration of CAP-based and emerging technologies.

What you need to know about Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs)?

- WEAs can be sent by State and Local public safety officials, the National Weather Service (NWS), the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and the President of the United States.
- WEAs can be issued for three categories – imminent threat, AMBER alerts, and presidential alerts.
- WEAs look like text messages, but are designed to get your attention and alert you with a unique sound and vibration, both are repeated twice.
- WEAs are no more than 360 characters, and will include the type and time of the alert, any action you should take, as well as the agency issuing the alert.
- WEAs are not affected by network congestion and will not disrupt texts, calls or data sessions that are in progress.
- Mobile users are not charged for receiving WEAs and there is no need to subscribe.
- To ensure your device is WEA-capable, check with your service provider.

Stay Informed!

KEEP AHEAD OF THE STORM

by listening to a NOAA Weather Radio, radio and television or on mobile phone/device applications for the latest winter weather advisories, watches and warnings in your area.



Radio, television and the internet are all good sources of weather data. However, if you want the most accurate and timely information, go to the source itself. You can listen to a weather radio designed to pick up broadcasts of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Commonly referred to as, NOAA Weather Radio (NWR), it provides continuous broadcasts of the latest weather information directly from the local National Weather Service offices. These broadcasts are tailored for your specific geographical area. The NWR radios can be purchased from many local electronic and sporting goods stores and catalogs.

An important feature is that the NWR will automatically turn itself on to alert you when a watch or warning has been issued, no matter what time of day or night. The newer radios can be programmed specifically for your county and some of the radios let you program specifically which alerts/warnings you may choose to receive.

The following National Weather Service Web site has additional information on the radios and their programming codes: https://www.weather.gov/nwr/county_coverage?State=ND

**The Specific Area Messaging Encoding (SAME) code for the Burleigh/Morton county area is:
SAME #: 038059 and Frequency: 162.475**



*KEEP AHEAD OF THE STORM WITH
A NOAA WEATHER RADIO or CELL
PHONE WEATHER ALERT APPs*



Your "One Stop Shop" for Weather Information

The Bismarck office of the National Weather Service provides a variety of daily weather products on their Web site to inform the public of weather conditions and to help you prepare for potential weather emergencies. If you are planning activities or traveling, this Web site will assist you in preparing for "what's happening" or what's predicted for the near future. We encourage you to visit this site and take a look at the wide variety of meteorological data that is at your finger tips. The Web site is:

<https://www.weather.gov/bis>

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

HOME FORECAST PAST WEATHER SAFETY INFORMATION EDUCATION NEWS SEARCH ABOUT

Local forecast by "City, St" or ZIP code
Enter location ... Location Help

News Headlines

- [Cold Advisory For Newborn Livestock \(CANL\)](#)
- [North Dakota Winter Weather Awareness Week October 30 through November 3, 2023](#)

IMPACTFUL WINTER WEATHER THIS WEEK
Click to view briefing.

MY FORECAST
Bismarck ND

NWS Forecast Office Bismarck, ND
Weather.gov > Bismarck, ND

Bismarck, ND
Weather Forecast Office

Current Hazards Current Conditions Radar Forecasts Rivers and Lakes Climate and Past Weather Local Programs

Click a location below for detailed forecast.

Overcast
42°F
6°C [Get Detailed Info](#)

Today
Chance Drizzle
High: 43°F

Tonight
50% → 60%
Chance Drizzle then Wintry Mix
Low: 28°F

[Watches, Warnings & Advisories](#)

- Winter Storm Warning
- Winter Weather Advisory
- Winter Storm Watch
- Special Weather Statement
- Hazardous Weather Outlook

Last Map Update: Wed, Oct. 25, 2023 at 8:14:11 am CDT

Weather Story
Impactful Winter Weather This Week
This Morning Through Late Thursday Night
October 25, 2023 10:42 AM

Weather Map
View on Oct 25 11:01 AM CDT Wed Oct 25 2023, 11:01 AM CDT Thu Oct 26 2023
View on Oct 25 11:01 AM CDT Wed Oct 25 2023, 11:01 AM CDT Thu Oct 26 2023

Local Radar

Be Prepared...Before the Winter Storm Strikes

At Home and at Work

The primary concerns are the potential loss of power, heat, telephone and/or internet service and a shortage of essential supplies if storm conditions continue for more than a day.

Have readily available at home/work:

- Cell phone with vehicular phone charger.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) and portable (AM-FM) radio to receive emergency information. These could become your main links to the outside world.
- Extra food and water. High energy food, such as dried fruit or candy, and food requiring no cooking or refrigeration is best.
- Extra supply of daily medicines and baby items.
- First-aid kit, manual and supplies.
- Heating fuel. Refuel before you are empty. Fuel carriers may not be able to reach you for days, both during or after a severe winter storm.
- Emergency heating source, such as a fireplace, wood stove, space heater, etc. Learn to use them properly to prevent a fire. Have proper ventilation. See page 16 for fire safety.
- Fire extinguisher and smoke detector. Test smoke detectors once a month to ensure they are working properly.
- Make sure pets have plenty of food, water and shelter.

On the Farm/Pets

- Move animals to sheltered areas.
- Haul extra feed to nearby feeding areas.
- Have a water supply available. Most animal deaths in winter storms occur from dehydration.
- Ensure portable or standby generators are fully operational and ready for use.



Be Prepared...Before the Winter Storm Strikes

In Vehicles

Plan your travel and check the latest weather reports for current and future weather conditions. If you or a relative are scheduled for a medical appointment and must travel a long distance when severe winter conditions are forecasted, consider seeking accommodations near the treatment facility to ensure you make your appointment.

- Fully check and winterize your vehicle before the winter season begins. See page 11.
- Carry a WINTER STORM SURVIVAL KIT:
 - √ Blankets/sleeping bags
 - √ Necessary medications
 - √ Flashlight with extra batteries
 - √ Road maps/cell phone navigation apps
 - √ Cell phone with vehicular cell phone charger
 - √ First-aid kit
 - √ Knife
 - √ High calorie, non-perishable canned or dried foods— portable can opener.
 - √ Extra clothing to keep dry; mitten, socks, and wool cap
 - √ A large empty can and plastic cover with tissues and paper towels for sanitary purposes
 - √ A smaller can and water-proof matches to melt snow for drinking water
 - √ Sack of sand (or kitty litter)
 - √ Shovel
 - √ Tow rope or chain
 - √ Windshield scraper and/or brush
 - √ Jumper/booster cables
 - √ Emergency flares
 - √ Water container
 - √ Fluorescent colored signal/marker flag
 - √ Gas line de-icer
 - √ Picture you and your family trapped in a car during a winter storm. If you can think of anything else you would need with you (games, diapers, etc.) add them to your WINTER STORM SURVIVAL KIT.
- Keep your gas tank near full to prevent ice in the tank and fuel lines which could leave you stranded.
- Try not to travel alone if at all possible.
- Let someone know your primary and alternate travel routes and anticipated timetables.



Know the Dangers of Exposure to the Cold and Wind

Winter temperatures can be deceiving. Prolonged exposure to cold air can cause frostbite or hypothermia and can even become life-threatening. Infants and the elderly are most susceptible. Get to know the warning signs, symptoms and treatment for the conditions indicated below.

Frostbite – is the damage to body tissue caused by exposure to extreme cold. A wind chill of -20°F will cause frostbite in just 30 minutes. Symptoms of frostbite are a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, or tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, get first aid help immediately! If you must wait for help, slowly rewarm the effected areas. However if the person is also showing signs of hypothermia, warm the body core before the extremities.

Hypothermia (Low Body Temperature) – is a condition brought on when the body temperature drops to less than 95°F . Hypothermia can cause long-term liver, kidney, or pancreas problems and can even be deadly. Symptoms of hypothermia include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. Take the person’s temperature. If below 95°F , seek medical care immediately! If medical care is not available, begin warming the person slowly. Warm the body core first. **Caution;** warming the arms and legs first drives cold blood toward the heart and can lead to heart failure. Get the person into dry clothing, and wrap them in a warm blanket covering the head and neck. **Do Not** give the person alcohol, drugs, coffee, or any hot beverage or food. Warm broth is the first food to offer.

What is Wind Chill? – is the temperature it “feels like” and based on rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by effects of both wind and cold. Animals are also affected by wind chill; however cars, plants, and other objects are not.

Wind Chill Chart

		Temperature ($^{\circ}\text{F}$)																	
		Calm	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	-25	-30	-35	-40
Wind (mph)	5	36	31	25	19	13	7	1	-5	-11	-16	-22	-28	-34	-40	-46	-52	-57	-63
	10	34	27	21	15	9	3	-4	-10	-16	-22	-28	-35	-41	-47	-53	-59	-66	-72
	15	32	25	19	13	6	0	-7	-13	-19	-26	-32	-39	-45	-51	-58	-64	-71	-77
	20	30	24	17	11	4	-2	-9	-15	-22	-29	-35	-42	-48	-55	-61	-68	-74	-81
	25	29	23	16	9	3	-4	-11	-17	-24	-31	-37	-44	-51	-58	-64	-71	-78	-84
	30	28	22	15	8	1	-5	-12	-19	-26	-33	-39	-46	-53	-60	-67	-73	-80	-87
	35	28	21	14	7	0	-7	-14	-21	-27	-34	-41	-48	-55	-62	-69	-76	-82	-89
	40	27	20	13	6	-1	-8	-15	-22	-29	-36	-43	-50	-57	-64	-71	-78	-84	-91
	45	26	19	12	5	-2	-9	-16	-23	-30	-37	-44	-51	-58	-65	-72	-79	-86	-93
	50	26	19	12	4	-3	-10	-17	-24	-31	-38	-45	-52	-60	-67	-74	-81	-88	-95
	55	25	18	11	4	-3	-11	-18	-25	-32	-39	-46	-54	-61	-68	-75	-82	-89	-97
	60	25	17	10	3	-4	-11	-19	-26	-33	-40	-48	-55	-62	-69	-76	-84	-91	-98

Frostbite Times		
30 minutes	10 minutes	5 minutes

Prepare Your Vehicles for Winter

Winter car care and safe driving tips are essential as the cooler fall weather signals that the snow, ice and hazards of winter season traveling are just around the corner. If you winterize your car now for the coming harsh winter weather you'll enhance your vehicle's serviceability, saving you from expensive repair bills later on. Rest assured, winter car care is easy to do! Check or have a mechanic check the following items on your car:

- * **Antifreeze levels** – ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
- * **Battery and ignition system** – should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean and tight. Ensure all belts are in good condition.
- * **Brakes** – Check for wear and that brake fluid levels are okay.
- * **Exhaust system** – check for leaks and crimped pipes and repair or replace as necessary.
Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.
- * **Fuel and air filters** – replace and keep water out of the fuel systems by adding additives (de-icers) and maintaining at least a half a tank of gas.
- * **Maintain at least a half a tank of gas** during the winter season.
- * **Heater and Defroster** – ensure they work properly.
- * **Lights and flashing hazard lights** – ensure they are all working properly.
- * **Oil** – check for oil level and correct weight for winter climates. Heavier weight oils get stiffer in lower temperatures and do not lubricate as well. Follow the recommended oil viscosity/weight in your vehicle owners manual.
- * **Thermostat** – ensure it is working properly, the thermostat directly effects heater and window defroster performance.
- * **Windshield wiper equipment** – repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.
- * **Install good winter tires** – make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radial tires are usually adequate for most winter driving conditions. Studded tires add additional response and traction during extreme icy and slippery road conditions.
- * **Place a Winter Storm Survival Kit in each car (See page 9 of this guide for kit items).**



Winterizing Your Home



Take the time now to get your home ready for the winter season by following these tips:

- √ Have your heating system checked by a professional annually. This will ensure your heating system is working safely and efficiently, in turn, this will save you money. If you heat by wood, clean your fireplace or stove. Have your chimney flue checked for any buildup or creosote and then cleaned to reduce the risk of fire.
- √ Make sure your home is properly insulated. If necessary, insulate the walls and attic. This will help you to conserve energy, reduce your utility bills as well as your home's power demands for heat.
- √ Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows to keep drafts and cold air out.
- √ Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic on the inside. This will provide an extra layer of insulation, keeping even more cold air out.
- √ Inspect and flush your water heater.
- √ Clean gutters and downspouts of leaves and debris to avoid ice dams from melting snow.
- √ Replace the batteries of smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors. If you didn't do it this fall when you set the clocks back, **do it now**.
- √ To keep pipes from freezing:
 - * Wrap pipes in insulation covered with plastic to keep out moisture.
 - * Let faucets drip a little to avoid freezing.
 - * Know how to shut off water valves, either the main line or other lines throughout the house.

Household Emergency Supplies



When winter has arrived, you should stockpile the following supplies in event a winter storm or power outage prevents you from leaving your home. Store enough supplies to last for three days.

Emergency Household Essentials

- Water - one gallon per person per day for at least three days
- First aid kit - freshly stocked and first aid manual
- Food - nonperishable foods that do not require refrigeration and easy to prepare
- Baby supplies - formula, bottles, pacifiers, diapers, wipes, food and juices
- Portable radio and flashlights with extra batteries
- One week supply of essential medications
- Extra eyeglasses and hearing aid batteries
- Fire extinguisher - ABC type
- Plastic knives, forks and spoons
- Paper plates, napkins and paper towels
- Pet food
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper - When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant.



Develop a Family Disaster Plan

Prepare for hazards that affect your area with a Family Disaster Plan. Where will your family be when disaster strikes? They could be anywhere: at work, at school or in the car. How will you find each other? Will you know if your family is safe? Disasters may force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if essential utility services - water, gas, electricity, or telephones - were cut off?

Steps to Take

1. **Gather information** about the most likely local hazards and how you should respond. Learn your communities alert/warning signals, local media alerts and preparatory actions for your family. Assess your risks and identify ways to make your home and property more safe and secure.

2. **Meet with your family to create a plan.** Discuss your plan with your family. Pick two places to meet: a link-up spot outside your home for emergencies, such as a fire, and a common place away from your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Choose an out-of-community/state relative or friend as your "family check-in contact" for everyone to call if the family gets separated. Discuss what you would do and where you would go if advised to evacuate your home or neighborhood. Don't forget to include your pets!

Implement your plan.

3.
 - Post emergency telephone numbers by the phone or program them in your cell phone.
 - Install safety features, i.e. smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms and fire extinguishers.
 - Inspect your home for potential safety hazards and take corrective action.
 - Have your family learn basic safety measures (e.g. basic first aid, CPR, fire extinguisher operations and how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity in your home).
 - Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 or your local emergency responders number.
 - Keep enough contingency supplies in your home for at least 3 days.
 - Keep important documents in a water/fire proof container.

4. **Practice and maintain your plan.** Ensure your family members knows the designated meeting places, phone numbers and safety rules. Conduct periodic drills. Test your smoke alarms monthly and change batteries at least once a year. Test and recharge your fire extinguishers according to the manufacturer's instructions. Replace stored contingencies of food and water every 6 months.



What If the Electricity Goes Out and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning?

If you lose electrical service during the winter, follow these helpful tips:

- √ Call your utility provider first to determine area repair schedules. Turn off or unplug lights and appliances to prevent a circuit overload when service is restored. Leave one light on to indicate when the power has been restored.
- √ To help prevent freezing pipes, turn on faucets slightly to keep water moving through the pipes. If your water system is dependent on electricity (i.e. well and pressure pump system) turn off main water line and open faucets to drain the pipes as much as possible.
- √ Protect yourself from carbon monoxide poisoning:
 - * **DO NOT** operate portable generators indoors; the engine emits deadly carbon monoxide gas.
 - * **DO NOT** use charcoal or gas grills to cook indoors. These too, can cause a buildup of carbon monoxide gas.
 - * **DO NOT** use your gas oven to heat your home... prolonged use of an open gas oven in a closed house can create carbon monoxide gas.
 - * Make sure fuel operated space heaters are used with proper ventilation.
- √ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to help reduce food spoilage. If a power outage is 2 hours or less, you need not be concerned about losing perishable foods. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours (24 if its half full) if the door remains closed.

Safety Measures for Re-entering Your Residence or Business: If you vacated your home or business due to loss of electrical or natural gas services, you should contact your local utility service provider or plumbing and heating company for specific instructions before restarting gas appliances, stoves, furnaces, water heaters and fireplaces, etc. Local news media outlets may also broadcast proactive safety measures of this nature.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a silent, deadly killer claiming about 1,244 lives each year in the United States. Such common items as automotive exhaust, home heating systems and obstructed chimneys can produce this colorless, odorless gas.

- **NEVER** run generators indoors. Open a window slightly when using a kerosene heater.
- **NEVER** use charcoal or gas grills to cook indoors.
- **NEVER** use a gas oven to heat your home.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include sleepiness, headaches, and dizziness.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, ventilate immediately, seek medical help or get to a hospital.



Carbon Monoxide Detector/Alarm

Fire Safety in Your Home

Fire Safety

Wood burning stoves, fireplaces and heaters add a cozy glow as well as supplementing your primary home heating system, but make sure you are using them correctly and safely.

- * Always keep a screen around an open flame.
- * Never use gasoline or charcoal lighter fluid to start your fireplace.
- * Never burn charcoal indoors.
- * Do not close the damper when embers or ashes are hot.
- * When using alternative heat sources such as a fireplace, woodstove, etc., always make sure you have proper ventilation. Keep curtains, towels and potholders away from hot surfaces.
- * Have your chimney checked before the season for creosote buildup... then clean it.
- * Never use firewood that is high in creosote content, such as fir, and pine logs.
- * Have a fire extinguisher and smoke detectors... and make sure they work!
- * Establish a well-planned fire escape route with the entire family.



Kerosene Heaters

If you use kerosene heaters to supplement your regular heating fuel, or as an emergency source of heat, follow these safety tips:

- * Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions.
- * Use only the correct fuel for your type unit.
- * Refuel outdoors ONLY, and only when the unit is cool.
- * Keep the heater at least 3 feet away from furniture and other flammable objects.
- * When using the heater, use fire safeguards and ventilate properly.

Remember, the fire hazard in your home is greatly increased in the winter because alternate heating sources are often used without following proper safety precautions.

NOTE: Keep fire hydrants near your home or business visible and free of snow.

Generator Safety

Standby or portable electric generators can provide you piece of mind and convenience when we are faced with temporary power outages caused by winter storms. But several critical safety factors need consideration before buying, installing and using them.

Permanent Standby Generators

If you own or operate a generator, you are responsible for making sure that the electricity from your unit cannot “**back feed,**” or flow into your local utility provider power lines. When a generator is permanently connected to a residents electrical system, it energizes the buildings wiring. This type installation requires a double pole, double throw transfer switch, that prevents the generator from being connected to your power companies power lines. **Only a qualified, licensed electrical contractor should install a permanent standby generator. You are responsible for any injuries or damage to your property, your neighbors, or the power company, from an improperly installed or operated generator.**

Portable Generators

Portable generators are designed to be connected only to selected appliances and lamps. These generators should **never** be connected directly to a building’s wiring system. Follow these safety guidelines when operating a portable generator:

- Before starting your generator, carefully read and follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Run generators outside, downwind of structures. **NEVER** run a generator indoors. Deadly carbon monoxide gas from the generator’s exhaust can spread throughout enclosed spaces.
- Prioritize your needs. Use the lowest wattage light bulbs that provide a safe level of light, reserving power for additional small appliances. Do not exceed the rated capacity of your generator. Most small, home-use portable generators produce from 350 to 12,000 watts of power. Overloading your generator will not only damage the generator, but also the appliances connected to it.
- Keep electrical cords along walls/furniture to avoid a tripping hazard. Never run cords under rugs or carpets.
- Extension cords must be properly sized to carry the electrical load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fire or damage to appliances and equipment.
- Fuel spilled on a hot generator can cause an explosion. Shut off the generator and let it cool before refueling.
- Keep children and pets away from running generators at all times.



Some Cold Facts About Ice Safety

For many of us in North Dakota, working or playing on ice of a river or lake is part of winter. Knowing how to do so is a matter of life or death. When is ice safe? There really is no sure answer. In fact, ice is probably never 100% safe. You can't judge the strength of ice just by its appearance. Ice strength is based on these factors – age, thickness, temperature, depth of water under the ice, size of the body of water and whether or not the ice is covered with snow.

Some Cold Facts About Ice

New ice is usually stronger than old ice. Four inches of clear, newly formed ice may support one person on foot, while a foot or more of old partially-thawed ice may not.

Ice seldom freezes uniformly. It may be a foot thick in one location and only a few inches thick just a few feet away.

Ice formed over flowing water and currents is often dangerous. Ice near streams, bridges, and culverts is usually weaker due to the undermining effect of faster current flow.

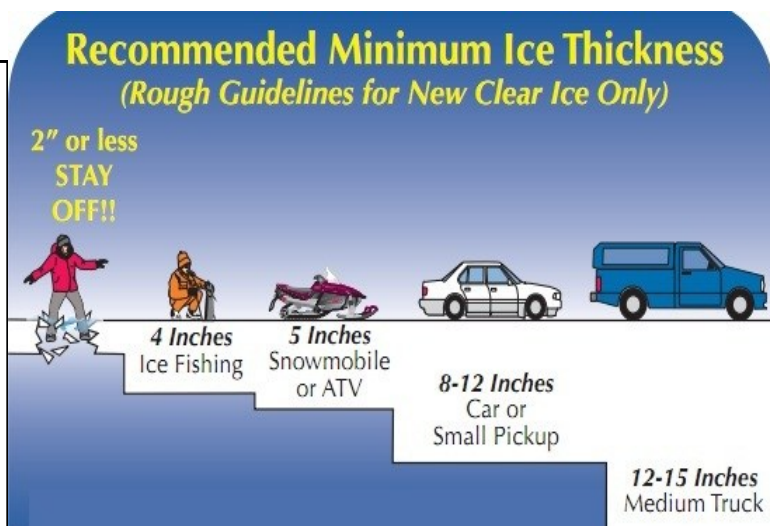
The insulating effect of snow slows down the freezing process. The extra weight also reduces how much weight the ice can support. Also, ice near shore can be weaker than ice that is farther out.

Booming and cracking ice isn't necessarily dangerous. It only means that the ice is expanding and contracting as the air temperature changes.

Check with a local resort or bait shop. They can advise you of current ice conditions and any known traditional unsafe areas before heading out on the ice.

Driving on Ice

Don't drive on the ice if you can possibly avoid it.



If you must, follow these common sense tips:

Stay off the ice at night, especially during a snowfall. If that's unavoidable, be very cautious and drive slowly since holes can open up very quickly. If you drive too fast you may not be able to stop in time.

Be prepared to bail out in a hurry! Ice safety experts recommend that you have your seat belt unfastened and a window rolled down or door slightly ajar to speed up an escape.

Your Final Answer?

Remember, common sense is your greatest ally in preventing ice accidents. Five minutes of checking ice from shore, and systemic checks while on the ice can mean the difference between and enjoyable outdoor experience and a tragedy.



Snow Blower Safety

Did you know?

Most snow blower injuries and fatalities happen because the operator did not read the operating and safety instructions.



Most emergency-room related injuries associated with snow blowers involve injuries to the hands or fingers, including amputation. The typical cause? Users tried to clear a clogged auger or discharge chute with their hands. To ensure your safety, please follow these safety guidelines:

- √ Read and understand the manufacturer's operating instructions before operating it.
- √ **DO NOT** disable the snow blower operator presence controls. Most snow blowers built since 1975 have an operator presence control that causes the snow blower to stop when the operator lets go of the hand controls.
- √ Inspect the blower to make sure all safety shields are in place and are not damaged. Tighten any loose nuts, bolts and screws. Before servicing, disconnect the spark plug wire.
- √ Add fuel before starting the engine. Never fuel an engine while it is running or hot.
- √ Dress properly for the weather conditions. Do not wear loose fitting clothing while operating machinery.
- √ Make sure all people, pets and debris are out of the way before you begin blowing snow.
- √ Pre-plan the placement of discharged snow. Do not direct the discharge chute toward windows, parked cars, roadways, or travel paths. Remember that objects other than snow will usually be thrown further than the snow discharge.
- √ When operating for extended periods of time, plug or muff type hearing protection should be used.
- √ **DO NOT** leave snow blower unattended when it is running. Shut off the blower and remove the key.
- √ If the chute or auger plugs up, follow these steps:

For Gas Engine Models

- Turn off the engine.
- Remove the spark plug wire.
- Use a stick, broom handle, or tool provided with the blower to free the snow or debris from the chute/auger.
- **Never, ever, reach into or place your hands in the auger housing or chute.**

For Electric Models: Use an outdoor rated extension cord and an outlet with Ground Fault Circuit Interruption (GFCI) protection. Make sure power cords are kept safely away from the spinning auger while blowing snow.

What If I Become Stranded?

If your vehicle becomes stalled or stopped, keep cool, and think the problem through. Decide on what is the best and safest thing to do.

- * If possible, pull off the highway, turn on hazard lights and hang a distress flag from the antenna or window.
- * Remain in your vehicle where rescuers are more likely to find you. Do not set out on foot unless you can see a building close by where you know you can take shelter. Disorientation and confusion comes very quickly in blowing and drifting snow.
- * Use your cellular phone to call for help. Even a phone with no cell service will call 9-1-1.
- * Run the engine and heater about 10 minutes each hour to keep warm, conserve fuel and reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. When the engine is running, open a window slightly for ventilation and periodically clear snow from the exhaust pipe. *This will protect you from carbon monoxide poisoning and ensure the engine stays running.*
- * Turn the dome light on when the engine is running so work crews or rescuers can see you.
- * Exercise periodically to maintain body heat, but avoid over exertion.
- * If there is more than one person in the car, take turns sleeping.
- * Drink fluids (avoid alcohol) to avoid dehydration. Melt snow before using it for drinking water. Eating snow lowers your body temperature, increasing risk of hypothermia.
- * If stranded in a remote area, stomp large letters in an open area spelling out HELP or SOS to attract the attention of rescue personnel who may be searching with an airplane.



If Caught In A Winter Storm...What Should You Do?



Outside

Find Shelter:

- Try to stay dry.
- Cover all exposed body parts.

No Shelter:

- Build a lean-to, wind-break, or snow cave for protections from the wind.
- Build a fire for heat and to attract attention.
- If possible place rocks around the fire to absorb and reflect the heat.

Melt snow for drinking water:

- Eating snow will lower your body temperature which could lead to hypothermia.



In a Vehicle

Stay in the vehicle:

- You will become quickly disoriented in wind driven snow and cold.
- Run the engine about 10 minutes each hour for heat.
- Open the window for a little fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.

Be visible to rescuers:

- Turn on dome light when running the engine.
- Tie a bright colored cloth, to your antenna or door.
- After the snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help.

Exercise:

- From time to time, move arms, legs, fingers and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.



Inside

Stay inside:

- When using alternate heat from a fireplace, wood stove, space heater, etc., use fire safeguards and properly ventilate.

No heat:

- Close off unneeded rooms.
- Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
- Cover windows at night.
- Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration and subsequent chills.

Cold Weather Care for the Elderly

As people become older, the body becomes less able to respond to long periods of exposure to cold winters. In cold weather, some older people may develop accidental hypothermia, which is a drop in internal body temperature that can be fatal if not detected and treated properly.

Accidental Hypothermia

Accidental hypothermia may occur in anyone who is exposed to severe cold without protection. Some older people develop accidental hypothermia after exposure to relatively mild cold temperatures. Those elderly persons most likely to develop accidental hypothermia are: the chronically ill, low income people who are unable to afford enough heating fuel and those who do not take the usual measures to keep warm. The small number of aged persons whose body temperature regulation is defective, face the greatest danger. For some unknown reasons, these people do not feel cold or shiver, and thus cannot produce enough body heat when they need it.

If your body temperature is below 95°F or does not register on a thermometer, seek emergency medical help. Other signs to look for include: an unusual change in appearance or behavior during cold weather; slow and sometimes irregular heartbeat; slurred speech; shallow or very slow breathing; sluggishness; bluing or purpling of the lips and confusion. Treatment consists of warming the person under a medical professional's supervision, preferably in a clinic or hospital.

Protective Measures

There is no scientific evidence for recommending adequate room temperatures for elderly people. However, setting the heat between 65°F to 70°F in living and sleeping areas should be adequate in most cases. Sick people may need more heat. Measures you can take to prevent accidental hypothermia include:

- Dress warmly even when indoors, eat enough food and stay as active as possible.
- Because hypothermia may start while sleeping, keep warm in bed by wearing enough clothing and blankets.
- If you take medicine to treat anxiety, depression, nervousness, or nausea, ask your doctor whether the medication might affect the control of body temperature.
- Ask friends or neighbors to look in on elderly persons once or twice a day, particularly during a cold weather spell.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Also referred to as Fuel Assistance, this program provides benefits to low-income individuals and families to assist with the payment of heating costs. The program is available October through May of each year. Seasonal benefits are based on household size, income, assets, housing type and size, and fuel used to heat the dwelling. For more information contact the Morton County Three Rivers Human Service Zone at 667-3395.

Winter Safety for Schools



Children can be especially susceptible to the extreme conditions associated with winter weather. Their youthful enthusiasm often takes over when common sense and safety should prevail. Even when they are cold, wet, or exhausted, they often are not conscious of the potential impact these conditions pose.

School administrators and teachers need to be sensitive to the dangers winter weather can pose to children and be prepared. Winter weather procedures and practices need to be established before the onset of the winter season. When formulating a school winter weather safety plan consider the following:

- The best source for the latest information is a NOAA weather radio (see Page 6 of this guide). Local radio or television stations should also be monitored for winter weather alerts.
- All schools need to have a functional winter weather plan in regard to closures due to snow, ice, or extreme cold.
- During the winter months, guidelines need to be established regarding outside recess periods. Temperatures and wind chills need to be monitored and criteria set as to when outside recess will be allowed.
- School bus drivers should receive extra training on driving during winter weather. Snow and ice can often accumulate quickly and unexpectedly on roads creating dangerous driving conditions.
- With many households having two working parents today, it may be necessary for some children to be brought to school early. Schools should make provisions to allow children inside schools buildings as early as possible during cold weather.



Protecting Your Pets



Just like humans, dogs and cats need protection from wet and cold weather. Give your pet a safer, healthier cold weather season by following these helpful tips:

- A temperature of 10°F or below is too cold for your pets to tolerate. The physical stress of cold temperatures can make pets more susceptible to illness or infection.
- Keep indoor pets in a dry-warm area free of drafts. Elevate your pet's bed off the floor.
- Provide outdoor dogs or cats with a dry, insulated pet house or shelter out of the wind. Don't use metal water/food dishes outside; your pet's tongue can stick to the frozen metal. Staying warm demands extra calories, so increase your pet's food intake, especially protein. Bring your pet inside if the wind chill or other weather conditions become severe.
- Remove ice, salt, and caked mud from your pet's paws and coat at once. Contact your veterinarian immediately if you suspect your pet has frostbite. Frostbitten skin may turn reddish, white, or gray, and it may be scaly or sloughing.
- If your dog is a swimmer, keep it on a leash around open water or unstable ice. Hypothermia can set in quickly and the dog may not be able to get out of the water. Don't take the chance of risking your dog's life, or yours.
- Cats and kittens often nap near or on car engines because of the warmth. Knock on the hood or honk the horn, then wait a few minutes before starting the car.
- Pets like the smell and taste of antifreeze, but even a small amount can kill them. Thoroughly clean up spills at once. Tightly close containers and store them where pets cannot get to them.
- Holiday decorations can hurt pets. Cover or tack down electrical cords. Keep tinsel and glass ornaments out of reach. Read warnings on items like spray-on snow. Never put ribbon around a pet's neck or allow it to play with plastic or foil wrappings or six-pack beverage holders.
- Keep your pet on its regular diet. Holiday treats, such as chocolate and bones, can be harmful or toxic.
- Many plants, including Christmas rose, holly, mistletoe, philodendron, poinsettia, and dieffenbachia are toxic to pets. Keep them out of your pet's reach.
- Always have fresh, clean water available.

Protection Tips for Livestock Producers

Shelter is of primary importance for livestock during a severe blizzard. Animals need protection from the wind chill factor as well as snow and ice that may cover their eyes and nostrils. Animals running in brush country or lowlands with timber usually survive if feed, water, and salt are readily available. When put into effect, the following ideas, will provide livestock with protection during a blizzard.



- Move livestock, especially young livestock, into sheltered areas. Shelter belts, properly oriented and laid out, provide better protection for range animals than shed type shelters.
- Sheds may cause cattle to overcrowd, with consequent overheating and respiratory disorders.
- Well-fed stock with a reserve nutrition supply will weather a blizzard much better than a herd which is fed only the minimum. It is recommended that livestock producers check with their county extension agent to determine the correct feed portions to ensure an adequate reserve.
- Haul extra feed to feeding areas before the storm arrives. Storm duration is the largest determination of livestock losses. If the storm lasts more than 48 hours, emergency feeding methods may be required. Concentrates in the form of pellets or cakes are excellent for providing emergency rations.
- Since livestock are subject to dehydration when left without water, the availability of water during and after a blizzard becomes very important. Because cattle cannot eat enough snow to satisfy their water intake, stockmen are advised to use water tank heaters to provide livestock with water.
- After a blizzard of several days duration, cattle that have been without salt frequently suffer from salt starvation. Take care, however, that livestock do not get too much salt during the recovery period.

You can access Farm and Ranch weather at the following Website:

www.weather.gov/bis/ag_CANL_heat



Additional Sources of Information

Morton County Webpage – <http://www.mortonnd.gov>

Contains information regarding Morton County Departments and all services available to the public and citizens of Morton County.



American Red Cross – <http://www.redcross.org>

The American red cross has many materials available to citizens wanting to expand their knowledge of disaster preparedness information.

ND Department of Transportation – <http://www.dot.nd.gov/>

A source of information regarding current road conditions and travel information as you plan your winter travels throughout North Dakota.

ND Department of Agriculture – <http://www.ndda.nd.gov>

A source of information for livestock producers regarding animal health and safety issues.

ND Department of Emergency Services – <http://www.des.nd.gov>

This state agency provides communications and coordination support to local and tribal governments for the planning, preparedness, response and recovery to local disasters. This agency coordinates deployment of regional mutual aid assets, as well as activation of state and federal resources during declared disasters.

National Weather Service Forecast Office – Bismarck – <http://www.weather.gov/bis>

This office provides weather, hydrologic and climate forecasts and warnings for Western and Central North Dakota.

Farmer's Almanac – <https://www.almanac.com>

An annual periodical famous for its long range weather predictions, gardening and human interest articles.

