



# Winter Storm

Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. The extreme cold and heavy snowfall that accompany winter storms can be debilitating and dangerous. Winter storms can affect everyone, even those who usually experience mild winters. Heavy snowfall can be blinding for drivers and dangerous for those it traps indoors. Winter storms also may include high winds, sleet, freezing rain, frozen roads, power outages, and dangerously cold temperatures.

## How to Prepare

- 1 **Stay informed.** ALL Marines (active duty and Reserve), civil service, and contractor personnel with a NIPR computer account—verify and update official contact information populated in the **Marine Corps Enterprise Mass Notification System (eMNS)** by information found in the Global Address List (GAL), and self-register all cell phones, home phone, email addresses, etc. in eMNS. Registration of personal information enhances Marine Corps Installations' ability to rapidly provide emergency information and changes to the base's operating status during non-working hours and wherever you are.
  - **Freezing rain**—Rain that freezes when it hits the ground. Ice may coat roads, walkways, trees, and power lines.
  - **Sleet**—Rain that freezes into ice pellets before it reaches the ground. Sleet can cause moisture on roads and walkways to freeze.
- 2 Know winter storm terminology:
  - **Winter storm watch**—A winter storm is possible. Stay tuned to radio or TV for more information and instructions.
  - **Winter storm warning**—A winter storm is occurring or will occur soon.
  - **Blizzard warning**—Considerable amounts of snow with sustained winds or frequent gusts up to 35 mph are expected to prevail for at least three hours. Visibility is reduced to less than a quarter mile.
  - **Frost/freezing warning**—Below-freezing temperatures are expected.
- 3 Be aware of the risk for severe winter weather in your area.
- 4 Be aware that the most destructive home fires happen during winter weather due to improper use of heating devices.
- 5 Make a **plan** and consider what to use for emergency heat in case the electricity goes out:
  - Fireplace with ample supply of wood
  - Small, well-vented camp stove with fuel
  - Portable space or kerosene heater (*check with your fire department first*)
- 6 Consider purchasing an emergency generator.
- 7 Make sure your home is properly insulated.
  - Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to keep out cold air.
  - Insulate pipes to prevent freezing.
- 8 Build an **emergency kit** that includes rock salt, sand, snow shovels and other snow-removal equipment, adequate winter clothing, and batteries for radio and flashlights.
- 9 Keep your car's gas tank full to keep the fuel line from freezing and for emergency use.
- 10 Make sure you have an adequate amount of winter clothing and blankets for your family.

**Set your own course through any hazard: stay informed, make a plan, build a kit. Live Ready Marine Corps.**



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## What to Do If There Is a Winter Storm

- Minimize travel. Travel only if you must, during the day and on main roads.
- Stay inside and monitor the radio or TV for more information or instructions.
- Eat regularly and drink plenty of fluids.
- Practice fire safety, and make sure there is plenty of ventilation if you are using a heat source that can produce hazardous smoke or fumes.
- Dress in several layers of warm clothing.
- If you are outside:
  - » Do not overexert yourself by shoveling snow or any other physical activity.
  - » Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from the extremely cold air.
  - » Keep dry and change any wet clothing as soon as possible.
  - » Watch for signs of frostbite: loss of feeling or pale appearance in extremities. Travel only if you must, during the day, and on main roads.
- If you are trapped in your car by a blizzard:
  - » Pull to the side of the road and put the hazard lights on.
  - » Remain in the vehicle, where rescuers are most likely to find you.
  - » Run the engine for 10 minutes every hour to keep warm.
  - » Exercise to maintain body heat, but do not overexert yourself.
  - » Drink fluids to avoid dehydration.
  - » At night, take turns sleeping and turn the inside light on.
  - » Be careful not to waste battery power.
  - » If you are stranded in a remote area, stomp large block letters in an open area that spell “HELP” or “SOS.”
  - » Leave the car on foot only if absolutely necessary and the blizzard has passed.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia: uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, slurred speech, and drowsiness.
- If signs of hypothermia are detected, keep the victim warm by removing all wet clothing, warm the center of their body first, and seek medical attention immediately.

## What to Do After a Winter Storm

- Stay tuned to radio, TV, or eMNS for more information, base closures, or instructions.
- Be aware of the possibility of flooding after a winter storm.
- Seek medical attention immediately if needed.
- Be very careful driving as roads may still be wet or frozen.
- Once you are in a safe place, follow your command’s protocols for personnel accountability and contact your command’s designated Point of Contact to check-in and report your location and situation.

## Where to Find Additional Information

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—[www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter)
- Department of Homeland Security (Ready.gov) & FEMA—[www.ready.gov/winter-weather](http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather)