



STEPS FOR AFTER THE WINTER STORM

“Once the initial impact of a winter storm has subsided, there are still many additional challenges to be faced, from snow removal to power restoration,” states Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Director Kurt Schwartz. “If you have taken the proper precautions, remain cautious and careful, you and your family are more likely to experience a successful outcome.”

- Be careful when shoveling snow. Over-exertion can bring on a heart attack – a major cause of death in the winter.
- Protect yourself by dressing for the season, wearing 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.
- Mittens are better than gloves.
- Wear a hat, as most body heat is lost through the top of the head.
- Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.
- Watch for signs of frostbite: loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in the extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes or the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, seek medical help immediately.

- Watch for signs of hypothermia: uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. If symptoms are detected, get medical help, as soon as possible.
- Do not become a 'spectator'. Continue to stay off streets and roads to allow plowing and clean-up operations to proceed smoothly.
- Help dig out fire hydrants and storm drains in your neighborhood.
- Avoid parking too close to corners, allowing Public Safety vehicles and plows to maneuver safely.
- Be aware of children playing in the streets, particularly climbing on or running out from behind large snowdrifts. Parents should remind their children to be aware of plowing operations and traffic.
- Clear exhaust vents from Direct Vent Gas Furnace Systems to avoid Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning.
- Never run an automobile until exhaust pipe has been cleared of snow.
- Safely reduce the amount of snow on roofs. The stress caused by heavy wet snow can challenge the integrity of the structure.
- Use care around downed power lines. Assume a down wire is a live wire
- Make sure emergency generators or secondary heating systems are well ventilated.
- In order to protect against possible voltage irregularities that can occur when power is restored, you should unplug all sensitive electronic equipment, including TVs, stereo, VCR, microwave oven, computer, cordless telephone, answering machine and garage door opener. Be sure to leave one light on, so you will know when power is restored.
- If your area has very wet snow or freezing rain, be aware that the weight of a one-half inch build-up of ice can be enough to snap tree limbs, causing them to fall and bring down power lines disrupting electrical service and introducing potential life-threatening situations. Never approach a downed line unless you are trained to perform such work. Remember also to consider the weight of wet snow when shoveling.
- If you lose your heat, seal off unused rooms by stuffing towels in the cracks under the doors. At night, cover windows with extra blankets or sheets. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat.
- Be extra cautious if you go outside to inspect for damage after a storm. Downed or hanging electrical wires can be hidden by snowdrifts, trees or debris, and could be live. Never attempt to touch or move downed lines. Keep children and pets away from them.
- Do not touch anything that power lines are touching, such as tree branches or fences. Call your utility company to report any outage-related problem.
- Make sure you always have a well-stocked Winter Home Emergency Supply Kit that includes flashlights, portable radio, extra batteries, a first aid kit, bottled water, non-perishable food and a manual can opener. The use of candles is strongly discouraged.

- If pipes freeze, remove insulation, completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they are most exposed to the cold. A hand-held hair dryer, used with caution, also works well.
- Snow can be melted for an additional water source.
- Call the Information Telephone Service 2-1-1 for non-emergency storm-related questions.
- Be a Good Neighbor. Check with elderly or relatives and neighbors who may need additional assistance to ensure their safety.

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