

ESP Focus

Cold Weather



Don't get caught in the cold!

What constitutes extreme cold and its effects can vary across different areas of the country. Even in regions unaccustomed to winter weather, near freezing temperatures are considered "extreme" cold. Whenever temperatures drop decidedly below normal and as wind speed increases, heat can leave your body more rapidly. These weather related conditions can lead to serious health problems. Extreme cold is a dangerous situation that can bring on health emergencies in susceptible people, such as those without shelter or who are stranded or who live in a home that is poorly insulated or without heat.

When winter temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can become a challenge. Extremely cold temperatures often accompany a winter storm, so you may have to cope with power failures and icy roads. Cold related issues can occur inside your home as well. Remember that it doesn't have to be extreme cold to be dangerous. Many homes will be too cold-either due to a power failure or because the heating system is not adequate for the weather. When people must use space heaters and fireplaces to stay warm, the risk of household fires increases, as well as the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Use the information on the reverse side of this Focus Sheet to help you prepare for cold weather.

Plan Ahead

Prepare for cold weather. There are steps that you can take in advance for greater safety in your home and in your car.

Emergency Supply List:

In addition to your regular emergency supply kit items, include the following:

- Alternate way to heat your home during a power failure; Dry firewood for a fireplace or wood stove, or kerosene for a kerosene heater, furnace fuel (coal, propane, or oil). Do not use Bar-b-que/charcoal grills inside your home.
- Electric space heater with automatic shut-off switch and non-glowing elements
- Blankets
- Matches
- Multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher
- First-aid kit and instruction manual
- Flashlight or battery-powered lantern
- Battery-powered radio
- Battery-powered clock or watch
- Extra batteries
- Non-electric can opener
- Snow shovel
- Kitty litter or rock salt (to pour on ice or snow to help with traction and melt the ice)
- Special needs items (diapers, hearing aid batteries, medications, etc.)

Winter Survival Kit for your home

Emergency Supply List:

- Food that needs no cooking or refrigeration, such as bread, crackers, cereal, canned food, and dried fruits. Remember baby food and formula if you have young children. Remember pet food if you have pets.
- Water stored in clean containers, or purchased bottled water (1 gallon per person per day) in case water pipes freeze and break.
- Medicines that family members or pets may need.

If you have pets, bring them indoors. If you cannot bring them inside, provide adequate shelter to keep them warm and make sure that they have access to unfrozen water.

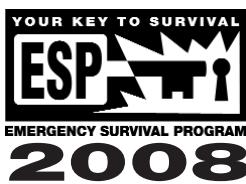
Prepare your car

You can avoid many dangerous winter travel problems by planning ahead. Have maintenance service on your vehicle as often as the manufacturer recommends.

Winter Survival Kit for your Car:

- Food and Water
- Blankets
- First aid kit
- A can and waterproof matches (to melt snow for water)
- Windshield scraper
- Booster cables
- Road maps
- Mobile phone
- Compass
- Toolkit
- Paper towels
- Bag of sand or kitty litter (to pour on ice or snow for added traction)
- Tow rope
- Tire chains (increase with heavy snow)
- Collapsible shovel
- Water and high-calorie canned or dried foods and a manual can opener
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Canned compressed air with sealant (for emergency tire repair)
- Brightly colored cloth to use as an emergency warning

HEALTH TIP: Eating well balanced meals will help you stay warmer. Do not drink alcoholic or caffeinated beverages—they cause your body to lose heat more rapidly. Instead, drink warm, sweet beverages or broth to help maintain your body temperature. If you have any dietary restrictions, ask your doctor.



This Focus Sheet is produced as part of the Emergency Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase home, neighborhood, business and school emergency preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and representatives from Contra Costa, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Marin, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura counties; Southern California Edison; the Southern California Earthquake Center and the American Red Cross assist in the development of campaign materials and coordination of the campaign.