

Emergency preparedness plan



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Emergencies can strike when least expected whether they be caused by a natural event such as the weather or those of an accidental nature such as a car wreck or fire spreading through a burning building. In either case, the key is to be prepared for an emergency incidence beforehand. In winter it makes sense to be prepared for a snowstorm as inclement weather can occur quite frequently and the results can sometimes be devastating. Planning ahead and keeping your house and car stocked with essential items can sometimes mean the difference between life and death.

The first step in preparing for a snowstorm is to keep an eye on the weather whether this be in the form of watching television newscasts or listening to the radio. Knowing what conditions are expected and how long they are expected to last is vital. A radio and flashlight with fresh batteries is always a good idea to have available at home in case power lines are affected by the storm and electrical service is no longer functioning. With a battery powered radio it is possible to follow the course of the storm and any alerts that may be issued.

Secondly, it is important to keep essential items well supplied. A cache of canned and non-perishable food items should be set aside in case of emergency. In a severe snowstorm, it may not be possible to leave home for several days and this is not the time you would want to run out of food. Should electricity be knocked out of service, canned and non-perishable items will be the easiest to prepare and eat as they do not require heating before eating. A manual can opener will also be required to open cans. Bottled water, too, is an essential to have on hand.

If water pipes freeze and burst, containers of potable water will be needed to survive, although in preparation for a snowstorm, it is better to wrap pipes and disconnect garden hoses so this does not occur. If sub-zero temperatures are expected, keeping a trickle of water coming out of the faucets will help to keep them from freezing. Medical supplies are also a must. Should an accident occur at home with no means of transportation available, having a first aid kit with essential medical supplies is a must.

CPR training is also a good idea. Prescription medications should be kept filled in order to have enough of a supply to last through a severe snowstorm. Staying indoors is recommended in order to avoid hypothermia from the frigid outside air. Extra blankets and sleeping bags should be kept handy. Again, if the electricity goes out, warm items will be needed to ensure you are able to keep warm without a central heating system. Make sure that there is enough supply of firewood to keep a fireplace going for several days.

A small, portable heater that operates on kerosene or its own power supply should also be purchased. Lastly, keeping an updated list of emergency contacts in an easily accessible place is imperative. Phone numbers for the police department, fire department, hospital and other emergency resources is always wise, even when weather is not inclement. If you should find yourself in an automobile when a snowstorm hits, additional precautions should be taken. Always dress in layers during the winter to keep yourself well insulated.

Bottled water and a few snacks in the car can keep your energy up if unable to drive through the snow. Keep your body moving and run the engine occasionally (with windows rolled down a bit) to stay warm. Keep a brightly

colored rag in the vehicle to attach to the antenna so that emergency vehicles are able to spot the car through the drifts of snow. Winter is a wonderful time of year signaling the advent of the holiday season. Being prepared for a snowstorm by following the guidelines above will ensure that no matter how much snow falls, you can stay safe and warm.