

Winter Storm Survival

Winter can be a dangerous season. Each year there are reports of people who have suffered fatal heart attacks from shoveling heavy snow or frostbite from exposure to sub-zero temperatures. Driving in extreme winter conditions can be even more dangerous.

Major winter storms can last for several hours and even days. They are accompanied by high winds, freezing rain or sleet, heavy snow and cold temperatures. What follows are a few suggestions to survive a winter storm.

Stay informed

Keep ahead of the storm by listening to the radio for the latest weather, winter storm watches, warnings and advisories. You can visit www.nws.noaa.gov for the latest in weather conditions.

Be prepared

Plan your trip to avoid the storm. Winterize your vehicle before the winter season begins. Keep your fuel tank near full to avoid ice in the tank and gas lines.

Carry a bag

Make sure the bag includes:

- Cellular phone, car phone charger and batteries
- Blankets and/or sleeping bags
- Warm clothing, boots, gloves and a hat
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- High-calorie non-perishable food
- Candle and matches
- Tool kit and tissues

Stay in your vehicle

If you're caught in a winter storm, it is recommended to stay inside and run the motor about ten minutes each hour for heat. Open a window a little for fresh air and to avoid carbon monoxide buildup, and make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.

Be visible to rescuers

Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine. Tie a colored cloth (red if possible) to an antenna or door.

Stay warm

Move your arms, legs, fingers and toes to keep blood circulating.

The best way to survive a winter storm is to avoid it altogether.