

Winter Advisories, Watches & Warnings

A Wind Chill Advisory is the effect of wind in combination with temperature, which increases the rate of heat loss to the human body.

A Travelers Advisory is issued when falling, blowing or drifting snow, freezing rain, drizzle, sleet or strong winds may make driving difficult.

A High Wind Watch indicates sustained winds of at least 40 mph or gusts of 50 mph are expected.

A Winter Storm Watch indicates severe winter weather conditions in the form of freezing rain, sleet or heavy snow may affect your area in 1-2 days.

A Winter Storm Warning indicates that severe winter weather conditions are imminent and will occur in your area within 12-24 hours.

A Blizzard Warning is issued when sustained winds of at least 35 mph are accompanied by falling or blowing snow which has restricted visibility.

COLUMBIA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

"Be Prepared, Keep Informed, Get Involved"

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Winter Weather

Facts & Tips



Columbia County EMA

Preparing For Winter

Heavy snow, ice and extreme cold can immobilize and isolate an entire region. Persons can become secluded in their homes for days. Matters may become more complicated with the loss of electric service.

Keep an adequate supply of heating fuel on hand. Consider refueling when your tank becomes half empty.

Have an alternate source of heat & fuel available such as a fireplace or a kerosene heater. Make sure you check local fire codes, your insurance policy and keep alternate heat sources properly cleaned and maintained.

Always maintain at least a three-day supply of drinking water and non-perishable food on hand for each family member.

Have a first aid kit, flashlights, extra batteries, and a battery operated radio readily available.

Remember your cell phone may still work even when your home phone does not.

Snow can be used for toilet flushing by mixing it with a partially filled container of water to accelerate melting. You can also shut off the power and use the water in your hot water tank, however remember to fill the tank before turning the power back on.

Outdoor Activity

Stay indoors during snow storms and extremely cold weather unless you're in very good physical condition.

Cold weather puts an extra strain on your heart which can be exacerbated by snow shoveling or pushing a stuck vehicle.

If you're in poor shape or not accustomed to exercise, consider hiring a contractor for your snow removal.

When going outdoors during cold weather have at least three layers of clothing on. Two inner layers for warmth and the outer layer to keep you dry, also wear a hat, boots and gloves.

Immediately change wet clothing, otherwise hypothermia will begin to set in. Hypothermia is a process by which a person's core body temperature starts to go down. If it goes down too far, that person will die.

Winter Traveling

If at all possible, avoid traveling during poor or deteriorating winter conditions. If you must travel by vehicle, make sure it has been kept in good operating conditions and equipped with snow tires or chains.

Keep an emergency supply kit in your vehicle consisting of a flashlight, flares, ice scrapper, rock salt, booster cables, tire iron, spare tire and a blanket.

Never let your fuel tank go below half full and refill it whenever a winter storm watch is issued.

Before leaving home make sure a family member knows where you're going, the route you're taking and your estimated time of arrival or return. Try to use major highways and principle roads as much as possible.

If your vehicle breaks down during a storm, put your 4-way flashers on and raise the hood to draw attention to your situation. When running the motor make sure the tailpipe is kept clear and a window is kept open an inch or two.

Never leave the safety of your vehicle unless you can see a lit building nearby.