

How to prepare for a winter storm: 5 tips to stay safe.



The worst weather can wreak havoc on the roads, your vehicle and your home. But luckily, there are proactive ways to prepare for a winter storm.

Follow our tips to stay safe and prepare for a winter storm:

1. **Listen to weather news and authorities.** When local authorities report conditions in your area, pay attention to the actual temperature AND the wind chill temperature. You should also familiarize yourself with the meaning of a winter storm warning (severe conditions have already begun or will start within 24 hours) and a winter storm watch (severe conditions could start within 36 to 48 hours).
2. **Prepare your vehicle.** When the weather takes a turn, stay off the roads as much as possible. If you must drive, make sure your vehicle controls are functioning properly. Fill your anti-freeze and washer fluid tanks, check the tread on your tires, fill your gas tank, keep a windshield scraper handy, and leave a blanket and warm clothing in the trunk in case of an accident or breakdown. (Bonus: Discover 14 things you should always keep in your car.)
3. **Prep your home.** Extreme cold puts your home at extreme risk. Keep the cold out and prevent pipes from freezing with proper insulation, caulking and weather stripping. Check to make sure your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working, too.
4. **Gather essential supplies.** Stock up on food that won't spoil and doesn't need to be heated in the event of a power outage. For example, keep water jugs on hand in case your pipes do freeze. And ensure you have flashlights and batteries in an accessible spot.
5. **Learn frostbite signs and treatment.** The colder the air, the more quickly frostbite can develop. When the temperatures reach extreme lows, frostbite can develop in as few as five

minutes. So if you notice frostbite forming, gently warm the area in warm (not hot) water or use body heat.

For even more winter storm safety tips, explore the Federal Emergency Management Agency's guide. Then, talk to an independent insurance agent about protection for winter storm damage.