

Emergency Preparedness Pointers

Winter Storms... *the Deceptive Killers*

Winter storms are considered deceptive killers because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. People die in traffic accidents on icy roads. People die of heart attacks while shoveling snow. People die of hypothermia from prolonged exposure to cold. Idaho is susceptible to many winter weather hazards including strong winds, extreme cold, ice storms and heavy snowstorms.

Types of Winter Hazards

Heavy Snow

Heavy snow can immobilize a region and paralyze a city, stranding commuters, stopping the flow of supplies and disrupting emergency and medical services. Accumulations of snow can collapse buildings and knock down trees and power lines.

Blizzards

Some winter storms are accompanied by strong winds, creating blizzard conditions with blinding wind-driven snow, severe drifting and dangerous winds chills. Strong winds with these intense storms can knock down trees, utility poles and power lines.



Ice Storms

Heavy accumulations of ice can bring down trees, electrical wires, and telephone poles. Communications and power can be disrupted for days while utility companies work to repair the damage.

Dense Fog

Dense fog can reduce visibility to 1/4 mile or even down to near zero in a winter storm. In worst cases, multiple vehicle accidents may occur.

Mud Slides

During periods of heavy rain falling on melting low elevation snow, mud slides can occur as steep hillsides slide into roadways. These slides are capable of containing large boulders that can smash an automobile.

Avoid overexertion. Don't shovel very heavy snow, push a car, or walk in deep snow for an extended period of time. The strain from the cold and the hard labor may easily cause a heart attack.

When Caught in a Winter Storm

If You're Outside....

- * Find shelter and try to stay dry.
- * Cover all exposed parts of your body.

If You Have No Shelter....

- * Prepare a lean-to, wind-break or snow cave for protection from the wind.
- * Build a fire for heat and to attract attention.
- * Place rocks around the fire to absorb and reflect heat.

If You're in a Vehicle....

- * Stay in your vehicle. Disorientation occurs quickly in wind-driven snow and cold.
- * Run the motor about ten minutes each hour for heat.
- * Open the window a little for fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- * Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.
- * Make yourself visible to rescuers by turning on the dome light at night when running the engine.
- * Tie a colored cloth to your antenna or door.
- * Raise the hood to indicate trouble after snow stops falling.
- * Exercise from time to time by vigorously moving arms, legs, fingers and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.

If You're at Home or in a Building....

- * Stay inside. When using alternative heat from a fireplace, wood stove or space heater use fire safeguards and properly ventilate the area.
- * If you have no heat close off unneeded rooms, stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors and cover windows at night.
- * Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration.
- * Wear layers of loose-fitting, light weight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration, and subsequent chill.

