

Communications Toolkit for Winter Weather

Provided for the partners of the Chester County Department of Emergency Services



NEWSLETTER SUGGESTIONS

FEEL FREE TO EDIT AS NEEDED.

COLD WEATHER

With the arrival of frigid winter weather, Chester County Department of Emergency Services (CCDES) reminds residents to take necessary precautions to prevent serious health and safety concerns. Preparing for exposure to colder temperatures can mean the difference between staying healthy and the possibility of serious injury or even death.

When exposed to cold temperatures, the human body loses heat faster than it generates it. Prolonged exposure to cold eventually uses up the body's stored energy and can result in a serious condition called hypothermia, characterized by abnormally low body temperature. Hypothermia is most likely to occur at very cold temperatures but can occur even at temperatures above 40° F if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat, or submersion in cold water.

Frostbite is another injury to the body caused by freezing and results in a loss of feeling and color in affected areas. It most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes. Frostbite can permanently damage the body, and severe cases can lead to amputation. The risk of frostbite is increased in people with reduced blood circulation and among people who are not dressed properly for extremely cold temperatures.

If you have heart disease or high blood pressure, follow your doctor's advice about shoveling snow or performing other hard work in the cold. Otherwise, if you have to do active outdoor chores, dress warmly, and work slowly. Because the body already is working hard just to stay warm, it is possible to get overheated, as well.

CCDES officials recommend the following tips to help keep you and your family safe and healthy during extremely cold weather:

- Try to stay indoors when the weather is extremely cold, especially if winds are high.
- If you must go outdoors, make trips outside as brief as possible.
- When going outside during very cold weather, adults and children should wear:
 - a hat
 - a scarf or knit mask to cover face and mouth
 - sleeves that are snug at the wrist
 - insulated and waterproof mittens or gloves
 - several layers of loose-fitting, thermal wear or material that "wicks" moisture off the skin
 - a water-resistant or tightly woven coat
 - two layers of socks with boots or shoes that are waterproof and have a flexible sole

Walking on ice is extremely dangerous. Many cold-weather injuries result from falls on ice-covered sidewalks, steps, driveways, and porches. Keep your steps and walkways as

free of ice as possible by using rock salt or another chemical de-icing compound. Sand or even cat litter may also be used on walkways to reduce the risk of slipping.

To find more cold weather safety tips, visit <https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

Cold Conditions

Frostbite and hypothermia can occur in less than 30 minutes. Pets and livestock need a warm dry shelter and access to food and fresh unfrozen water.

What to do during a winter storm

- Keep posted on weather conditions. Listen to local media sources or your NOAA weather radio.
- Prepare for isolation at home. Keep an emergency kit on hand.
- Check with neighbors and relatives who may need extra assistance.
- Prevent wood/oil-burning stoves, fireplaces, or electric heaters from overheating and becoming fire hazards. Fill all liquid fuel heating devices outside buildings.
- Stay indoors. Overexertion from activities such as snow shoveling is a major cause of winter storm deaths.
- Dress in warm layers.
- Travel only if necessary, and then only in daylight on major roads.
- Do not travel alone and let someone know your schedule and destination.

If caught in a vehicle:

- Don't leave the vehicle unless help is in sight.
- Open a window to ensure proper ventilation while running the engine.
- Signal trouble by raising the hood, tying a cloth on the antenna, or turning on flashers.
- Don't burn anything in the vehicle.

To find more cold weather safety tips, visit <https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

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SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

All posts are 280 or fewer characters.

The following can be used as relevant information for winter weather.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: @CDCReady and @CDCEmergency
 NWS Mt. Holly: @NWS_MountHolly
 Chester County DES - @CCDES

GENERAL WINTER	
Social Media Messages <i>Suitable for Twitter/Facebook/Instagram</i>	These messages have been formatted for Facebook/Instagram
Clear off your porch roof/overhang. The weight of all this snow can cause them to fail and collapse.	
Please make sure that your fire hydrants and drains are clear. Please clear 3 feet around the sides and back and clear to the street.	
Learn how to stay safe before, during, & after winter storms & extreme cold by visiting: https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather	
Talk with your family about how to get prepared for cold weather: http://go.usa.gov/cr42T	
Prepare for winter weather. Get tips at https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather	

<p>Stay safe during winter weather. Monitor weather alerts and have a preparedness kit ready. http://www.ready.gov/kit</p>	
<p>Will you know what to do when a winter storm arrives? Get the scoop at https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather</p>	
<p>Don't let winter storms freeze your preparedness planning! Be ready ahead of time with https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather</p>	
<p>Will you know what to do when a winter storm arrives? Get the info you need: https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather</p>	
<p>Prepare for winter storms and cold weather with the kids by playing the disaster master game: www.ready.gov/kids/games. Password hint: SLEET</p>	
<p>We politely remind you to not call 9-1-1 to report your power is out. Be sure to call your electric utility to report your power is out.</p>	<p>We politely remind you to not call 9-1-1 to report your power is out. Be sure to call your electric utility to report your power is out. Contact information can be found below.</p> <p>PECO: (800) 841-4141 or https://www.peco.com/Outages/ReportanOutage/Pages/default.aspx</p> <p>PPL: (800) 342-5775 or https://www.pplelectric.com/outages/report-an-outage/step1</p> <p>MetEd: (888) 544-4877 or https://www.firstenergycorp.com/outages_help/Report_Power_Outages.html</p>

<p>How prepared or UNprepared are you for a winter storm? Learn what to do, “When the Sky Turns Gray.” http://bit.ly/1IBzFOY</p>	
<p>Extreme weather including winter storms can be stressful. Trained counselors at the Disaster Distress Helpline are ready to listen 24/7 by calling: 1-800-985-5990 or by texting TalkWithUs to 66746 (msg/data rates apply). For more information visit: http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov</p>	
<p>Talk with your family about how to get prepared for extreme cold weather: https://www.ready.gov/kids/disaster-facts/winter-storms-extreme-cold</p>	
<p>Winter weather travel tip: follow directions from local officials and build an emergency car kit. More tips and information: https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather</p>	
<p>Snow Prep tips: check on neighbors, charge cell phones, find flashlights (check batteries) and follow local officials online.</p>	
<p>Staying safe before, during, and after winter weather. More Info - https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather</p>	
<p>Is your food safe after a power outage? http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/refridg_food.html</p>	<p>If your home was without power, your food may be at risk. Perishable foods can rapidly grow bacteria when kept at improper temperatures. Educate yourself on proper food storage and the health risks of food after a winter storm. Use http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/refridg_food.html food charts to help you decide what to keep and what to toss.</p>
<p>Staying safe before, during, and after winter weather. More Info -</p>	

<p>https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather</p>	
	<p>This is a common question during snow events - What is the difference between a snow emergency and a state of emergency? Here is your answer: A Snow Emergency is a specific plan enacted by the local government that places parking restrictions along pre-designated routes. A State of Emergency in PA - is a specific travel restriction that means only authorized personnel are allowed to travel on the roads</p>
<p>Are we still in a storm warning? Get the latest weather updates from the NWS Mt. Holly page. https://twitter.com/NWS_MountHolly</p>	<p>Are we still in a storm warning? Get the latest weather updates from the NWS Mt. Holly page. https://www.facebook.com/NWSMountHolly</p>
<p>Be a good neighbor!! Help people who require special assistance such as elderly people living alone, people with disabilities, and children.</p>	
<p>Snow Prep tips: check on neighbors, charge cell phones, find flashlights (check batteries) and follow local officials online.</p>	
<p>Make a plan to connect before a winter storm by text, e-mail, social media & cell: https://www.ready.gov/plan</p>	
<p>Include enough food, water, meds & anything used daily in your emergency kit to last for at least 72 hrs</p>	
<p>Before a winter storm: Have emergency supplies ready in your home; when the storm hits, stay put and off the roads.</p>	
<p>Winter is just around the corner. Get prepared by updating your emergency kit: www.ready.gov/kit</p>	

Get ahead of winter storms by making sure your emergency kit for your car is fully stocked: www.ready.gov/car	
Hitting the road this winter? An emergency kit for your car might come in handy when you least expect it!	
Keep water, non-perishable food, and an extra set of warm clothes in the car in case you get stranded during winter weather. https://www.ready.gov/car	
Seasons change and so should your car's disaster kit! Winterize your wheels with these emergency items. https://www.ready.gov/car	
During a snowstorm: Listen to local officials, stay off roads, charge devices in case power goes out, and check on neighbors.	
Stay off icy roads when winter storm advisories & watches are issued.	
Stay off roads during & after a winter storm. If you must drive "Don't Crowd the Plow!"	
Prepare your car for winter: keep your gas tank near full to help avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.	
Ice and snow, take it slow—slower speed, slower acceleration, slower steering, and slower braking.	
Snowstorm tip: clear snow & ice off of fire hydrants so fire departments can gain access.	

Layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing will keep you warmer than one bulky sweater.	
Babies are most often affected by hypothermia. Learn preventive tips for them at: http://1.usa.gov/1ESt0v9	
Hypothermia is caused by cold temps & wet/windy weather. Get more facts about how to prevent it: https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather	
Freezing temperatures increases frostbite risk. Learn the warning signs of frostbite: https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather	
Many people die each year from heart attacks brought on by shoveling snow. Pace yourself & get your neighbors involved.	
These winter weather items may come in handy if driving: a shovel, salt/sand, ice scraper, blankets, water, extra clothing & flashlight. Keep them in your trunk just in case!	
When it's freezing... limit time outside and check on your neighbors!	
When driving in snow, keep a distance of 6 car lengths between you and the car in front of you.	
If you get stuck in snow while driving stay in your vehicle. Learn more safety tips at https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather	

Dress warmly and wear proper boots when venturing out! Learn more safety tips at https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather	
If you have to drive in winter weather, stock your car w/ supplies like booster cables, blankets, snacks & flares	

PET SAFETY	
Social Media Messages <i>Suitable for Twitter/Facebook/Instagram</i>	These messages have been formatted for Facebook/Instagram
Winter Safety Tip: Bring your furry friends inside when temperatures take a dip! More pet prep tips: www.ready.gov/pets	
Rock salt may help melt snow and ice, but the chemicals can be fatal to your pets. Clean their paws after each trip outside!	
Your pet may think antifreeze is sweet, but it's not a dessert! Find out more: https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/cold-weather-safety-tips	
Prepare your pooch for cold weather! Tip: Wipe your dog's paws after each trip outside. Ice-melting chemicals can be fatal; they may also make your pet sick or irritate their skin and mouth.	
Bring your furry friends inside when temperatures take a dip! More pet prep tips: https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/cold-weather-safety-tips	
Don't leave your dog inside a parked car. During the winter it can act as an icebox and trap cold air inside.	

FIRE SAFETY

<p>Social Media Messages <i>Suitable for Twitter/Facebook/ Instagram</i></p>	<p>These messages have been formatted for Facebook/Instagram</p>
<p>Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from a fireplace, wood stove, or space heater. Watch this short video from @usfa to learn how to prevent portable heater fires in your home this winter: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AMQ1ASnmNU</p>	
<p>Be careful trying to stay warm this winter. Using unsafe heating devices indoors can cause CO poisoning!</p>	
<p>If you're running a portable generator, you need to have a working Carbon Monoxide alarm in your home.</p>	
<p>Winter Safety Tip: NEVER use a generator, camp stove, charcoal grill, gasoline, or propane heater indoors.</p>	
<p>NEVER heat a home by using the stovetop or oven.</p>	
<p>Keep generators outside at least 20 feet away from doors, windows, and vents to avoid accidental CO poisoning.</p>	
<p>Wear layered clothing and use blankets to stay warm during a winter storm.</p>	
<p>Winter fire safety: use portable heaters with an automatic shut-off to avoid the risk of fire if the device tips over.</p>	
<p>As the mercury falls, you may use portable heating sources to warm your home. Heating equipment is a leading cause of home fire deaths in the U.S. There are steps you can take to prevent this tragedy. How do you stay safe when using these devices? https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/PortableFireplaceSafety.ashx</p>	

Space heaters cause one-third of home heating fires and 4 out of 5 home heating fires deaths. Protect your family: if you're heating your home with a space heater this winter, take a few moments to review these tips from the U.S. Fire Administration:
<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/PortableFireplaceSafety.ashx>

POWER OUTAGE	
Social Media Messages <i>Suitable for Twitter/Facebook/ Instagram</i>	These messages have been formatted for Facebook/Instagram
Winter storms can cause power outages. Share these tips and prepare now: https://www.ready.gov/power-outages	
Conserve power to avoid power outages during extreme cold. Only use appliances with heavy electrical loads (dishwashers, washers, dryers) early in the morning or late at night. For more tips and information visit: www.ready.gov/power-outage .	
Power outages can leave you without a way to communicate, but if you are prepared, they don't have to! What items would you include in your disaster kit to help you stay safe during a power outage this winter?	
Make a plan to check on neighbors if extreme cold or winter weather knocks out your power.	
Get the kids involved in preparing for power outages before winter weather: https://www.ready.gov/kids	
Tip: Dim the brightness in your cell phone settings to save battery life.	
Need to take shelter in extreme cold? Contact your local Office of Emergency Management to find a warming center near you.	

<p>Do you know what to do if the power goes out? Build an emergency kit today. Learn what you can do to prepare today: https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather</p>	
<p>We politely remind you to not call 9-1-1 to report your power is out. Be sure to call your electric utility to report your power is out.</p>	<p>We politely remind you to not call 9-1-1 to report your power is out. Be sure to call your electric utility to report your power is out. Contact information can be found below.</p> <p>PECO: (800) 841-4141 or https://www.peco.com/Outages/ReportanOutage/Pages/default.aspx</p> <p>PPL: (800) 342-5775 or https://www.pplelectric.com/outages/report-an-outage/step1</p> <p>MetEd: (888) 544-4877 or https://www.firstenergycorp.com/outages_help/Report_Power_Outages.html</p>
<p>Using a generator? Make sure to place it outside the home. Incorrect generator use can lead to CO poisoning from the engine exhaust or fire.</p>	

CARBON MONOXIDE	
Social Media Messages <i>Suitable for Twitter/Facebook/ Instagram</i>	These messages have been formatted for Facebook/Instagram
With cold temperatures, we want to stay warm, but using space heaters and even wood fires increases carbon monoxide in the air. This can lead to potential carbon monoxide poisonings.	
If carbon monoxide poisoning is suspected, seek fresh air and call 9-1-1 or the Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222	
Make sure to check your carbon monoxide detector or install one if you don't have one.	
Check heating systems, chimney flues, and gas appliances every year. Get them cleaned and serviced as needed by qualified heating/appliance contractors.	
Never run a portable generator or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, camper, or other enclosed structure, even if doors and windows are open	
Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.	
Use charcoal grills, hibachis, or portable camping stoves outside your home, garage, basement, tent, or camper. Using them indoors or in an enclosed space can produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.	
Use caution with kerosene or gas space heaters. Use vented space heaters.	

<p>Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headache Dizziness Weakness Nausea Vomiting Chest pain Confusion 	
<p>Avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning: install CO detectors, have the furnace checked regularly, keep portable generator >20 ft from home.</p>	
<p>Did you know that Carbon Monoxide is tasteless, colorless, and odorless? Learn more about the signs and symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning and how to prevent leaks from happening in your home or business. https://www.cdc.gov/co/</p>	

FROSTBITE	
Social Media Messages <i>Suitable for Twitter/Facebook/ Instagram</i>	These messages have been formatted for Facebook/Instagram
Reduce your time outdoors if possible. If you are going out for extended periods, make sure to cover exposed skin. Wear a hat, scarf, mittens or gloves. Dress in layers and stay dry.	
Frostbite is an injury to the body that is caused by freezing. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and color in affected areas.	
Frostbite Symptoms: a white or grayish-yellow skin area, skin that feels unusually firm or waxy and numbness	
What to do for Frostbite: Get into a warm room as soon as possible and seek medical attention as soon as possible.	

HYPOTHERMIA	
Social Media Messages <i>Suitable for Twitter/Facebook/ Instagram</i>	These messages have been formatted for Facebook/Instagram
When outside, make sure to watch for symptoms of hypothermia. When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up your body's stored energy.	
Winter is here and it's time to think about cold weather safety; specifically hypothermia. Older adults, babies, and people who are outdoors for long periods have an increased risk for hypothermia. Get prepared now and visit: https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather	
Shivering, memory loss and slurred speech are just some of the signs of hypothermia. If you see any of these signs with your loved ones, call 911 immediately. More info: https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather	

SMART 911	
Social Media Messages <i>Suitable for Twitter/Facebook/ Instagram</i>	These messages have been formatted for Facebook/Instagram
Give 9-1-1 info that could help save your life. Create a Safety Profile at www.smart911.com	
If you have not taken the time to create your FREE @Smart911 Safety Profile, please take a few moments to do so at www.smart911.com	
70% of 9-1-1 calls are from cell phones. Give 9-1-1 the info they need by creating a Safety Profile at www.smart911.com	
Be Smart About Safety. Create your Smart911 Safety Profile at www.smart911.com . It's free and could save your life!	
The more time 9-1-1 can save the more lives they can save. Take 5 mins to create a Safety Profile at www.smart911.com	
Help us, help you. Create a Safety Profile today at www.smart911.com and give 9-1-1 the info they need.	
Chester County now offers Smart911! All citizens should create a Safety Profile at www.smart911.com	
ChesCo first responders are now better equipped to help you thanks to Smart 911. Create your Safety	

Profile at www.smart911.com	
You don't plan to call 9-1-1, but now you can plan ahead. Be Smart About Safety. www.smart911.com	
Learn more about the free @Smart911 service provided to all Chester County residents.	
Chester County first responders are now better equipped to help you thanks to Smart 911. Create your Safety Profile at www.smart911.com	
Chester County now offers Smart911! All citizens should create a Safety Profile at www.smart911.com	
First responders are better equipped to help you when you create a Safety Profile at www.smart911.com	
Take 5 minutes right now to create your Smart911 Safety Profile at www.smart911.com . It's free and could save your life!	
Be Smart About Safety. The more time 9-1-1 can save the more lives they can save. Take 5 minutes to create a Safety Profile at www.smart911.com	
You don't plan to call 9-1-1, but now you can plan ahead. Protect your family by creating a Smart911 Safety Profile today at www.smart911.com	

READYCHESCO	
Social Media Messages <i>Suitable for Twitter/Facebook/ Instagram</i>	These messages have been formatted for Facebook/Instagram
Make sure to register for ReadyChesCo and receive information on emergencies like flooding, evacuations, and other weather matters. Get emergency & related information directly to your home phone, work phone, smartphone, or tablet. Does ReadyChesCo Alert You?	
Chester County uses ReadyChesCo that notifies registered users of important emergency information. You have complete control over alerts and can choose the delivery method of your choice: text, email, or phone call. Does ReadyChesCo Alert You?	
Get information when you need it and how you want it, visit www.readychesco.org Registration is simple and you pick the delivery method: text, email, or phone call. How are you and your family notified of weather events in Chester County? Does ReadyChesCo Alert You? Register today to	

receive alerts & notifications for Chester County @ www.readychesco.org .	
Does ReadyChesCo Alert you? www.readychesco.org	
Get alerted by text, email, or phone for the latest emergency information with www.readychesco.org	
Emergency information when you need it & how you want it at www.readychesco.org	
Text, email, or phone. Get emergency notifications the way you want at www.readychesco.org - Does ReadyChesCo Alert You?	
Does ReadyChesCo Alert You? Receive notifications about emergency road closures, public health crises, major power & utility interruptions @ www.readychesco.org	
ReadyChesCo alerts you of weather emergencies anywhere in Chester County @ www.readychesco.org	
At home, work, in your car - ReadyChesCo can alert you no matter where you are on multiple devices. Register today @ www.readychesco.org	