

Winter Storm Preparation

In The Home

Like the Boy Scout motto "Be Prepared" we must make certain preparations before the storm. Sit down with your family and make a list of critical areas that must be addressed to live comfortably during a wintertime loss of electricity. This is called a winter Contingency Plan, things to list might include: heat, water, food preparation, food preservation, lighting, etc. Now, with everyone gathered, brainstorm ideas to address each critical area. Don't worry how silly something might sound, give credit for the idea and write it down. Next, go back and discuss each idea looking for safety, reasonability, and affordability. Once an option is selected work out the detail on implement the idea. Keep an informal log on each critical area, how you will address it, and the details on how to accomplish it.

EMERGENCY POWER GENERATORS

If your contingency plan includes the use of a generator take the time now to do it right.

- 1) Have a generator switch installed on your electrical panel. This switch prevents power from your generator traveling back into the power lines, possibly killing or injuring a repair/lineman miles away.
- 2) Use at least a 12 gauge or heavier cord to hook into your house. Lighter cords can be an extreme fire hazard.
- 3) Operate your generator *outside* only! This includes an attached garage. Gasoline engines produce large amounts of carbon monoxide and will find it's way into your home even from an attached garage with the doors standing open.
- 4) let the generator cool off before attempting to refuel and NEVER refuel with the engine running. Common sense, but it happens every year. Be patient, it only takes a couple of minutes to cool down.

AUXILIARY HOME HEATING

The longer power is out the more urgent our need becomes for another way to keep the house warm. Remember, *safety* is the key word here! Choose a method that maintains your level of fire safety. Correctly installed and operated room heaters can be just as safe as any heating appliance. Follow the operating instruction, keep combustibles three feet from the heaters and don't leave children unattended in the he same room with a space heater. Also choose a system that is easily refueled, and does not produce carbon monoxide in your house.

Vented (chimney attached) heaters are best. If un-vented heaters such as a kerosene or propane space heaters are used make sure that you open windows and provide ventilation. Wood stoves and fireplaces work fine but have them inspected and cleaned regularly. Store fuels including gas, kerosene, propane in their appropriate containers and keep them (including firewood) in a safe location away from the house.

Freezing Water Pipes

Install a hose bib drain just above your water meter to drain your system. To drain - shut off the water, attach a garden hose to the bib, open the bib valve then open all your faucets. Next, hook the hose to the water heater drain and follow the same process. Don't forget to flush all toilet stools. Pouring RV anti-freeze into the drains and stools will protect them from freezing. Finally wrap the water meter in lots of blankets.

CAR SURVIVAL KIT MATERIALS

Minimum 1/2 tank of fuel, in the tank

Extra Clothing

Matches & Candles

First Aid Kit

Knife

Flashlight & Batteries

Shovel

Tow Chain

Booster Cables

Bright Ribbon or Cloth

Blankets & Sleeping Bags

Bag of Sand or Kitty Litter

Compass & Map

Fire Extinguisher

Police Whistle

TRAVELER'S SURVIVAL TIPS

Stay with your vehicle until help arrives.

Tie a bright ribbon or cloth around the antenna to signal for help.

Keep exhaust pipes clear of snow.

Keep a window cracked for air circulation and release of poisonous fumes.

Take turns sleeping and watching for help.

Use dome light at night to attract attention.