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Winter Survival Tips

Preparing Your Family

- Assemble a disaster supply kit. Store drinking water, canned/no-cook food, non-electric can opener, first aid kit, battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries where you can get them easily, even in the dark. Also include winter specific items such as rock salt, sand and other snow removal equipment.
- Prepare for the possibility that you will need to stay in your home for several days after a winter storm. Make sure that you have sufficient heating fuel as well as emergency heating equipment in case electricity is cut off.
- House fires pose an additional risk, as more people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions. Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them.
- Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends and neighbors or employees.
- Maintain ventilation when using kerosene heaters to avoid a build-up of toxic fumes and always refuel outside. Keep all heaters at least three feet from flammable objects.
- Dress in several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. Outer garments should be tightly woven and water-repellent. Wear a hat, mittens and sturdy, waterproof boots. Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs from extremely cold air.

Preparing Your Car

- Keep cars and other vehicles fueled and in good repair. Winterize your car by checking your car battery, ignition system, thermostat, lights, flashers, exhaust, heater, brakes, defroster and tires. Ensure that your car has adequate antifreeze, windshield washer fluid and oil and check regularly throughout the season.
- Place a winter emergency kit in each car that includes a shovel, windshield scraper, flashlight, battery powered radio, extra batteries, water, snack food, extra hats and mittens, blanket, tow chain or rope, road salt and sand, booster cables, emergency flares and fluorescent distress flag.
- If traveling by car during a winter weather advisory or winter storm watch, do so in daylight, don't travel alone, keep others informed of your schedule and route, and stay on main roads. Avoid driving during a winter storm warning or blizzard warning.

Preparing Your Home

- Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic, insulate walls and attics, and apply caulk and weather-stripping to doors and windows.
- Winterize your house, barn, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment. Clear rain gutters; repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.
- Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).
- Hire a contractor to check the structural ability of the roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow - or water, if drains on flat roofs do not work.
- Remove ice and snow from tree limbs, roof and other structures after the storm passes.

Winter Weather Terms

- Know the terms used by weather forecasters so that you clearly understand the risk to your family and your community, including:
 - Winter weather advisory - Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous, especially to motorists;
 - Winter storm watch - Be alert, a storm is possible;
 - Winter storm warning - Take action, the storm is occurring or will soon occur in the area;
 - Blizzard warning - Snow and strong winds combined will produce blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts, and life-threatening wind chill - seek refuge immediately;
 - Frost/freeze warning - Below freezing temperatures are expected.

For more information on crime prevention education you may visit our website at www.co.ramsey.mn.us/sheriff/index.asp