Winter Weather Preparedness And Safety Guide

Made possible by
Bowman County Local Emergency Planning Committee
Slope County Local Emergency Planning Committee

Introduction

The Bowman County and Slope County Department of Emergency Services publishes this guide with the hope that the information it contains will prove helpful for the safety of our residents . The goal of ***"Winter Weather Preparedness"*** is to inform residents on how to prepare for and stay safe in response to threatening winter weather conditions. We appreciate your efforts to help share this critical and lifesaving information with your family and friends. Please feel free to photocopy and distribute the information included in this guide.

This guide contains vital safety information and severe/hazardous winter weather terms. This information is intended to prompt Bowman County and Slope County citizens to assess and evaluate their preparedness plans for your home, school, work and during play.

This preparedness guide explains the threats and dangers of winter weather and suggests life-saving actions YOU and family members can take this winter. With this information, YOU can better recognize winter weather threats, develop an action plan and be ready when severe winter weather threatens. Remember...your safety is up to YOU.

The information contained in this guide is a compilation of public safety information published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the American Red Cross, the National Weather Service and Centers for Disease Control. To find additional materials on winter safety, try the following Web sites:

National Weather Service: www.weather.gov
Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov
American Red Cross: www.redcross.org
Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/flu

Special thanks to
Stark County Department of Emergency Services
and Morton County Office of Emergency Management
For allowing the adaption of their
"Winter Weather Preparedness and Safety Guide" for our area.

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Being Aware and Being Prepared

Did You Know?

Winter Storms are considered ***Deceptive Killers*** because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. Everyone is potentially at risk during winter storms. The actual threat to YOU depends on your specific situation. Recent statistics indicate the following are related to the cause of winter deaths:

Related to ice and snow:

- About 70% occur in vehicles
- About 25% are people caught in the storm

Related to exposure to cold:

- 50% are people over 60 years old
- Over 75% are males
- About 20% occur in the home

Winter storms, especially blizzards, can be very dangerous. Preparing before extremely cold, snowy weather occurs can save your life. Become familiar and know what winter storm advisories, watches and warnings mean. Stay informed by listening to local radio, television and National Weather Service announcements. If you must travel or are traveling during winter storm conditions, call 511 for ND state road reports or visit the ND Department of Transportation, ND Travel Information Map for current road conditions at this Web site; www.dot.nd.gov/travel-info/ to stay informed.

If possible, try to stay indoors during a blizzard. If you have to go outside to check on animals or for any other reason, be sure to dress warmly in loose fitting layers of clothing. Cover your mouth so that you don't breathe in freezing cold air that can damage your lungs. Keep your body dry. Know the signs of hypothermia or frostbite.

Winter weather related dangers can be very unexpected. Being ***aware*** and being ***prepared*** for a potential hazardous situation could save your life.

511 Travel Info

Getting to Know Winter Weather Terms

Let's become familiar with the National Weather Service (NWS) terms that are frequently used in winter weather forecasts. If you are in the alerted area, check your TV or listen to your local radio station or a weather radio for the latest advisories. Knowing these key weather terms enables you to take the necessary precautionary measures during winter weather forecasts.

OUTLOOK

Winter Storm Outlook—Issued prior to an official Winter Storm Watch. The Outlook is given when forecasters believe winter storm conditions are possible. This prediction is usually issued 3 to 5 days in advance of a winter storm.

ADVISORIES

Wind Chill Advisory—Issued for wind chills of 25 to 39 below zero with a wind speed of 5 mph.

Winter Weather Advisory—Issued when 4 to 6 inches of snow is expected in a 24 hour period.

Freezing Rain/Drizzle Advisory—Issued when an accumulation of up to 1/4 inch is expected.

Blowing/Drifting Snow Advisory—Issued when blowing snow will restrict visibility to 1/4 mile or less for 3 hours or more. Travel will be hampered.

Dense Fog Advisory—Issued when wide-spread fog will reduce visibility at or below 1/4 mile.

High Wind Advisory—Issued when sustained winds of 30 mph or greater are expected to last one hour or longer or wind gusts of 45 mph or greater.

WATCH

Winter Storm Watch—Alerts the public to the possibility of heavy snow, a blizzard, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Watches are usually issued 12 to 36 hours before the beginning of a storm.

WARNINGS

Ice Storm Warning—Heavy ice accumulations (1/4 inch thick or more) will cause extremely dangerous and damaging situations, such as extremely icy roads and downed power lines.

Winter Storm Warning—Issued when a combination of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain or heavy sleet is expected to occur. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin. Heavy snow constitutes 4 inches or more of snow in 12 hours or less, or 6 inches or more in 24 hours.

Blizzard Warning—Issued for sustained or gusty winds of 35 mph or more, with falling or blowing snow reducing visibility to less than 1/4 mile. These conditions should persist for at least 3 hours.

Wind Chill Warning—Issued for wind chills of 40 below zero or colder with a wind speed of at least 5 mph.

Stay Informed!

KEEP AHEAD OF THE STORM
by listening to a NOAA Weather Radio, local radio and television for the latest winter storm advisories, watches and warnings in your area.

Newspaper, radio and television are all good sources of weather data. However, if you want the most accurate and timely information, go to the source itself. You can listen to a weather radio designed to pick up broadcasts of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Commonly referred to as NOAA Weather Radio (NWR), it provides continuous broadcasts of the latest weather information directly from the local National Weather Service offices. These broadcasts are tailored for your specific geographical area. The radios can be purchased from many local retail stores.

An important feature is that the NWR will automatically turn itself on to alert you when a watch or warning has been issued, no matter what time of day or night. The newer radios can be programmed specifically for your county and some of the radios let you program specifically which alerts/warnings you may choose to receive.

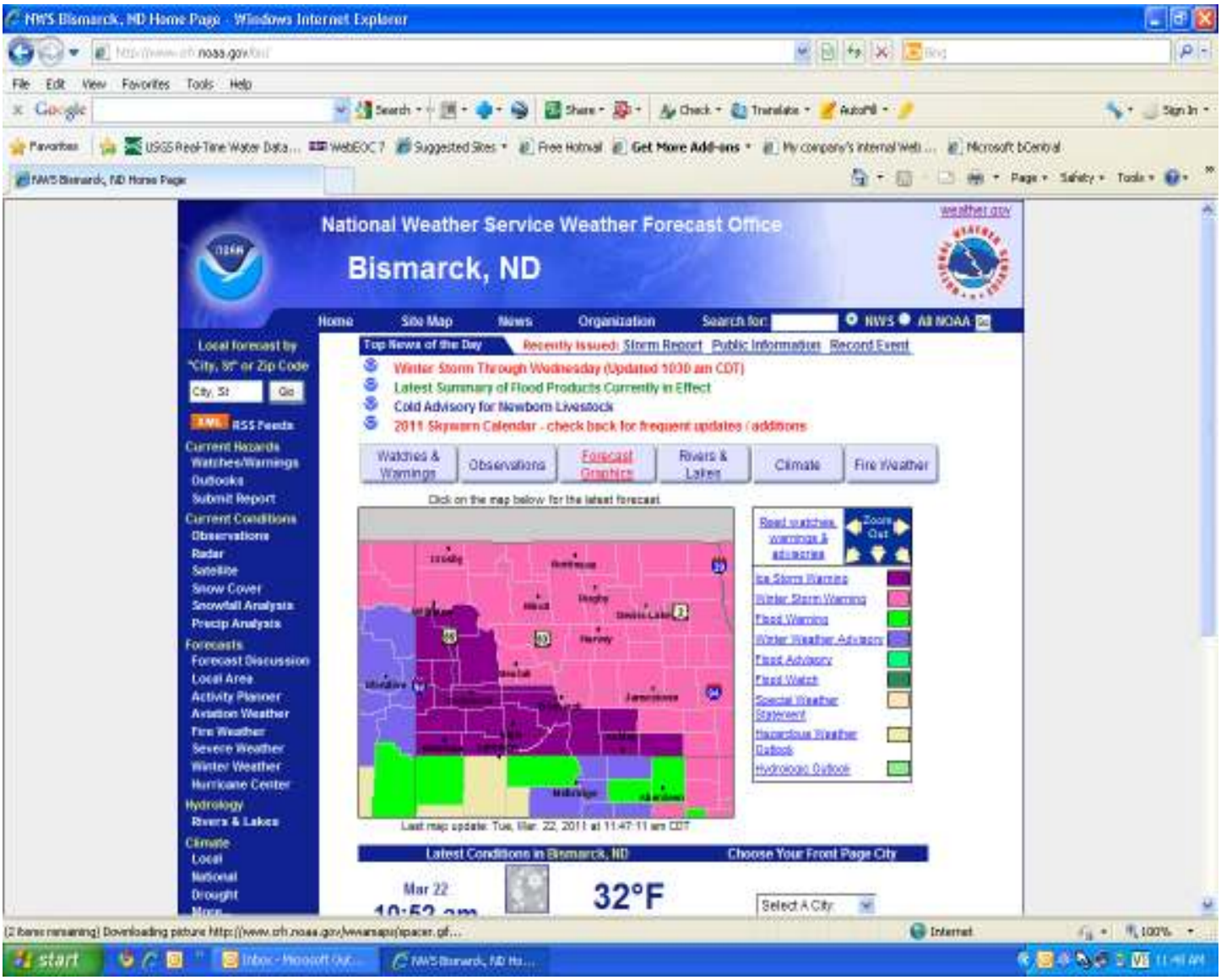
The following National Weather Service Web site has additional information on the radios and their programming codes: http://www.crh.noaa.gov/bis/?n=nwr

KEEP AHEAD OF THE STORM WITH A NOAA WEATHER RADIO

Your "One Stop Shop" for Weather Information

The Bismarck office of the National Weather Service provides a variety of daily weather products on their Web site to inform the public of weather conditions and to help you prepare for potential weather emergencies. If you are planning activities or traveling, this Web site will assist you in preparing for "what's happening" or what's predicted for the near future. We encourage you to visit this site and take a look at the wide variety of meteorological data that is at your finger tips. The Web site is:

http://www.crh.noaa.gov/bis/



Be Prepared…Before the Winter Storm Strikes

At Home and at Work

The primary concerns are the potential loss of heat, power, telephone service and a shortage of necessary supplies if storm conditions continue for more than a day.

Have readily available:

- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) and portable (AM-FM) radio to receive emergency information. These could become your main links to the outside world.
- Extra food and water. High energy food, such as dried fruit or candy, and food requiring no cooking or refrigeration is best.
- Extra supply of medicine and baby items.
- First-aid kit, manual and supplies.
- Heating fuel. Refuel before you are empty. Fuel carriers may not be able to reach you for days, both during or after a severe winter storm.
- Emergency heating source, such as a fireplace, wood stove, space heater, etc. Learn to use them properly to prevent a fire. Have proper ventilation. See page 14 for fire safety.
- Fire extinguisher and smoke detector. Test smoke detectors once a month to ensure they are working properly.
- Make sure pets have plenty of food, water and shelter.

On the Farm

- Move animals to sheltered areas.
- Haul extra feed to nearby feeding areas.
- Have a water supply available. Most animal deaths in winter storms occur from dehydration.
- Ensure portable or standby generators are fully operational and ready for use.

Be Prepared…Before the Winter Storm Strikes

In Vehicles

Plan your travel and check the latest weather reports for current and future weather conditions.

- Fully check and winterize your vehicle before the winter season begins. See page 9.
- Carry a WINTER STORM SURVIVAL KIT:
  - √ Blankets/sleeping bags
  - √ Necessary medications
  - √ Flashlight with extra batteries
  - √ Road maps
  - √ Cell phone with vehicular cell phone charger
  - √ First-aid kit
  - √ Knife
  - √ High calorie, non-perishable canned or dried foods
  - √ Extra clothing to keep dry; mittens, socks, and wool cap
  - √ A large empty can and plastic cover with tissues and paper towels for sanitary purposes
  - √ A smaller can and water-proof matches to melt snow for drinking water
  - √ Sack of sand (or kitty litter)
  - √ Shovel
  - √ Tow rope or chain
  - √ Windshield scraper and/or brush
  - √ Jumper/booster cables
  - √ Emergency flares
  - √ Water container
  - √ Fluorescent colored signal/marker flag
  - √ Gas line de-icer
  - √ Picture you and your family trapped in a car during a winter storm. If you can think of anything else you would need with you (games, diapers, etc.) add them to your WINTER STORM SURVIVAL KIT.
- Keep your gas tank near full to prevent ice in the tank and fuel lines which could leave you stranded.
- Try not to travel alone if at all possible.
- Let someone know your primary and alternate travel routes and anticipated timetables.

Know the Dangers of Exposure to the Cold and Wind

Winter temperatures can be deceiving. Prolonged exposure to cold air can cause frostbite or hypothermia and can even become life-threatening. Infants and the elderly are most susceptible. Get to know the warning signs, symptoms and treatment for the conditions indicated below.

Frostbite—is the damage to body tissue caused by exposure to extreme cold. A wind chill of –20°F will cause frostbite in just 30 minutes. Symptoms of frostbite are a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, or tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, get medical help immediately! If you must wait for help, slowly rewarm the effected areas. However if the person is also showing signs of hypothermia, warm the body core before the extremities.

Hypothermia (Low Body Temperature)—is a condition brought on when the body temperature drops to less than 95°F. Hypothermia can cause long-term liver, kidney, or pancreas problems and even be deadly. Symptoms of hypothermia include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. Take the person's temperature. If below 95°F, seek medical care immediately! If medical care is not available, begin warming the person slowly. Warm the body core first. ***Caution;*** warming the arms and legs first drives cold blood toward the heart and can lead to heart failure. Get the person into dry clothing, and wrap them in a warm blanket covering the head and neck. **Do Not** give the person alcohol, coffee, or any hot beverage or food. Warm broth is the first food to offer.

Wind Chill—is not the actual air temperature, but rather how wind and cold affect exposed skin. Animals are also affected by wind chill; however cars, plants, and other objects are not.

Wind Chill Chart

	Temperature (°F)																		
Wind (mph)	Calm	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	-25	-30	-35	-40	-45
	5	36	31	25	19	13	7	1	-5	-11	-16	-22	-28	-34	-40	-46	-52	-57	-63
	10	34	27	21	15	9	3	-4	-10	-16	-22	-28	-35	-41	-47	-53	-59	-66	-72
	15	32	25	19	13	6	0	-7	-13	-19	-26	-32	-39	-45	-51	-58	-64	-71	-77
	20	30	24	17	11	4	-2	-9	-15	-22	-29	-35	-42	-48	-55	-61	-68	-74	-81
	25	29	23	16	9	3	-4	-11	-17	-24	-31	-37	-44	-51	-58	-64	-71	-78	-84
	30	28	22	15	8	1	-5	-12	-19	-26	-33	-39	-46	-53	60	-67	-73	-80	-87
	35	28	21	14	7	0	-7	-14	-21	-27	-34	-41	-48	-55	-62	-69	-76	-82	-89
	40	27	20	13	6	-1	-8	-15	-22	-29	-36	-43	-50	-57	-64	-71	-78	-84	-91
	45	26	19	12	5	-2	-9	-16	-23	-30	-37	-44	-51	-58	-65	-72	-79	-86	-93
	50	26	19	12	4	-3	-10	-17	-24	-31	-38	-45	-52	-60	-67	-74	-81	-88	-95
	55	25	18	11	4	-3	-11	-18	-25	-32	-39	-46	-54	-61	-68	-75	-82	-89	-97
	60	25	17	10	3	-4	-11	-19	-26	-33	-40	-48	-55	-62	-69	-76	-84	-91	-98

Frostbite Times		
30 minutes	10 minutes	5 minutes

Seasonal Flu Protection

Flu is a serious contagious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death. Each year in the United States, an average of 200,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 die from complications of the seasonal flu. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) urges you to take the following **"Take 3"** actions to protect yourself and others from the flu:

1

Take time to get the flu vaccine.

- A yearly flu vaccine is the first and most important step for protection.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated as soon as the seasonal flu vaccine is available.
- People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant woman, people with chronic health conditions (asthma, diabetes, or heart and lung disease) and people 65 years and older.
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.
- Vaccination is also important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people as mentioned above.
- Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for them should be vaccinated instead.

2

Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand rub/sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread to your body this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like symptoms, stay at home for 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities.

3

Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them.

- If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can treat your illness.
- Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics. They are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) and are not available over-the-counter.
- Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.
- It's important that antiviral drugs be used early (within the first 2 days of symptoms) to treat people who are very sick or those who are at increased risk of the flu.
- Flu like symptoms include; fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may be infected with the flu, and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

Prepare Your Vehicles for Winter

Winter car care and safe driving tips are essential as the cool fall weather signals that the snow, ice and hazards of seasonal motoring are just around the corner. If you winterize your car now for the coming harsh winter weather you enhance your vehicle's serviceability, saving you from expensive repair bills later on. Rest assured, winter car care is easy to do! Check or have a mechanic check the following items on your car:

* **Antifreeze levels**—ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
* **Battery and ignition system**—should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean and tight. Ensure all belts are in good condition.
* **Brakes**—Check for wear and that brake fluid levels are okay.
* **Exhaust system**—check for leaks and crimped pipes and repair or replace as necessary. ***Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.***
* **Fuel and air filters**—replace and keep water out of the fuel systems by adding additives (de-icers) and maintaining a full tank of gas.
* **Heater and Defroster**—ensure they work properly.
* **Lights and flashing hazard lights**—ensure they are all working properly.
* **Oil**—check for oil level and correct weight for winter climates. Heavier weight oils get stiffer in lower temperatures and do not lubricate as well. Follow the recommended oil viscosity/weight in your vehicle owners manual.
* **Thermostat**—ensure it is working properly, the thermostat directly affects heater and defroster performance.
* **Windshield wiper equipment**—repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.
* **Install good winter tires**—make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radial tires are usually adequate for most winter driving conditions. Studded tires add additional response and traction during extreme icy and slippery road conditions.
* **Maintain at least a half a tank of gas** during the winter season.
* **Place a Winter Storm Survival Kit in each car (See page 6 of this guide for kit items).**

Winterizing Your Home

Take the time now to get your home ready for the winter season by following these tips:

√ Have your heating system checked by a professional annually. This will ensure your heating system is working safely and efficiently, in turn, will save you money. If you heat by wood, clean your fireplace or stove. Have your chimney flue checked for any buildup or creosote and then cleaned to reduce the risk of fire.

√ Make sure your home is properly insulated. If necessary, insulate the walls and attic. This will help you to conserve energy, reduce your utility bills as well as your home's power demands for heat.

√ Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows to keep drafts and cold air out.

√ Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic on the inside. This will provide an extra layer of insulation, keeping even more cold air out.

√ Inspect and flush your water heater.

√ Clean gutters and downspouts of leaves and debris to avoid ice dams from melting snow.

√ Replace the batteries of smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors. If you didn't do it this fall when you set the clocks back, do it now.

√ To keep pipes from freezing:

* Wrap pipes in insulation covered with plastic to keep out moisture.
* Let faucets drip a little to avoid freezing.
* Know how to shut off water valves, either the main line or lines throughout the house.

Household Emergency Supplies

When winter has arrived, you should stockpile the following supplies in event a winter storm or power outage prevents you from leaving your home. Store enough supplies to last for three days.

Emergency Household Essentials

- Water - one gallon per person per day for at least three days
- First aid kit - freshly stocked and first aid manual
- Food - nonperishable foods that do not require refrigeration and easy to prepare
- Baby supplies - formula, bottles, pacifiers, diapers, wipes, food and juices
- Portable radio and flashlights with extra batteries
- One week supply of essential medications
- Extra eyeglasses and hearing aid batteries
- Fire extinguisher - ABC type
- Plastic knives, forks and spoons
- Paper plates, napkins and paper towels
- Pet food
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper – When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.

Develop a Family Disaster Plan

Prepare for hazards that affect your area with a Family Disaster Plan. Where will your family be when disaster strikes? They could be anywhere: at work, at school or in the car. How will you find each other? Will you know if your family is safe? Disasters may force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services - water, gas, electricity, or telephones - were cut off?

Steps to Take

1. **Gather information** about the most likely local hazards and how you should respond. Learn your communities alert/warning signals, local media alerts and preparatory actions for your family. Asses your risks and identify ways to make your home and property more safe and secure.

2. **Meet with your family to create a plan.** Discuss your plan with your family. Pick two places to meet: a link-up spot outside your home for emergencies, such as a fire, and a common place away from your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Choose an out-of-community/state relative or friend as your "family check-in contact" for everyone to call if the family gets separated. Discuss what you would do and where you would go if advised to evacuate your home or neighborhood. Don't forget to include your pets!

3. **Implement your plan.**
   - Post emergency telephone numbers by the phone or program them in your cell phone.
   - Install safety features, i.e. smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms and fire extinguishers.
   - Inspect your home for potential safety hazards and take corrective action.
   - Have your family learn basic safety measures (e.g. basic first aid, CPR, fire extinguisher operations and how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity in your home.
   - Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 or your local emergency responders number.
   - Keep enough contingency supplies in your home for at least 3 days.
   - Keep important documents in a water/fire proof container.

4. **Practice and maintain your plan.** Ensure your family members know the designated meeting places, phone numbers and safety rules. Conduct periodic drills. Test your smoke alarms monthly and change batteries at least once a year. Test and recharge your fire extinguishers according to the manufacturer's instructions. Replace stored contingencies of food and water every 6 months.

What If the Electricity Goes Out?

If you lose electrical service during the winter, follow these helpful tips:

√ Call your utility provider first to determine area repair schedules. Turn off or unplug lights and appliances to prevent a circuit overload when service is restored. Leave one light on to indicate when the power has been restored.

√ To help prevent freezing pipes, turn on faucets slightly to keep water moving through the pipes. If your water system is dependent on electricity (i.e. well and pressure pump system) turn off main water line and open faucets to drain the pipes as much as possible.

√ Protect yourself from carbon monoxide poisoning:

- **DO NOT** operate generators indoors; the engine emits deadly carbon monoxide gas.
- **DO NOT** use charcoal or gas grills to cook indoors. It too, can cause a buildup of carbon monoxide gas.
- **DO NOT** use your gas oven to heat your home… prolonged use of an open gas oven in a closed house can create carbon monoxide gas.
- Make sure fuel operated space heaters are used with proper ventilation.

√ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to help reduce food spoilage.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a silent, deadly killer claiming about 1,000 lives each year in the United States. Such common items as automotive exhaust, home heating systems and obstructed chimneys can produce the colorless, odorless gas.

- **NEVER** run generators indoors. Open a window slightly when using a kerosene heater.
- **NEVER** use charcoal or gas grills to cook indoors.
- **NEVER** use a gas oven to heat your home.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include sleepiness, headaches, and dizziness.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, ventilate immediately , seek medical help or get to a hospital.

Carbon Monoxide Detector/Alarm

Fire Safety in Your Home

Fire Safety

Wood burning stoves, fireplaces and heaters add a cozy glow as well as supplementing your primary home heating system, but make sure you are using them correctly and safely.

* Always keep a screen around an open flame.
* Never use gasoline or charcoal lighter to start your fireplace.
* Never burn charcoal indoors.
* Do not close the damper when embers or ashes are hot.
* When using alternative heat sources such as a fireplace, woodstove, etc. always make sure you have proper ventilation. Keep curtains, towels and potholders from hot surfaces.
* Have your chimney checked before the season for creosote buildup… then clean it.
* Never use firewood that is high in creosote content, such as fir and pine logs.
* Have a fire extinguisher and smoke detectors… and make sure they work!
* Establish a well-planned fire escape route with the entire family.

Kerosene Heaters

If you use kerosene heaters to supplement your regular heating fuel, or as an emergency source of heat, follow these safety tips:

* Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions.
* Use only the correct fuel for your unit.
* Refuel outdoors ONLY, and only when the unit is cool.
* Keep the heater at least 3 feet away from furniture and other flammable objects.
* When using the heater, use fire safeguards and ventilate properly.

Remember, the fire hazard in your home is greatly increased in the winter because alternate heating sources are often used without following proper safety precautions.

NOTE: Keep fire hydrants near your home or business visible and free of snow.

Generator Safety

Standby or portable electric generators can provide you piece of mind and convenience when we are faced with temporary power outages caused by winter storms. But several critical safety factors need consideration before buying, installing and using them.

Permanent Standby Generators

If you own or operate a generator, you are responsible for making sure that the electricity from your unit cannot **"back feed,"** or flow into your local utility provider power lines. When a generator is permanently connected to a residents electrical system, it energizes the buildings wiring. This type installation requires a double pole, double throw transfer switch, that prevents the generator from being connected to your power companies power lines. **Only a qualified, licensed electrical contractor, should install a permanent standby generator. You are responsible for any injuries or damage to your property, your neighbors, or the power company, from an improperly installed or operated generator.**

Portable Generators

Portable generators are designed to be connected only to selected appliances and lamps. These generators never should be connected directly to a building's wiring system. Follow these safety guidelines when operating a portable generator:

- Before starting your generator, carefully read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Run generators outside, downwind of structures. NEVER run a generator indoors. Deadly carbon monoxide gas from the generator's exhaust can spread throughout enclosed spaces.
- Prioritize your needs. Use the lowest wattage light bulbs that provide a safe level of light, reserving power for additional small appliances. Do not exceed the rated capacity of your generator. Most small, home-use portable generators produce from 350 to 12,000 watts of power. Overloading your generator will not only damage the generator, but also the appliances connected to it.
- Keep electrical cords out of the way to prevent a tripping hazard. Never run cords under rugs or carpets.
- Extension cords must be properly sized to carry the electrical load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fire or damage to appliances and equipment.
- Fuel spilled on a hot generator can cause an explosion. Shut off the generator and let it cool before refueling.
- Keep children away from generators at all times.

Outdoor Activities Safety

Dress for the Season

* Wear loose, lightweight, warm clothing in several layers. Trapped air between the layers acts as an insulator. Layers may be removed to avoid perspiration and subsequent chill.

* Outer garments should be tightly woven, water repellant and hooded.

* Always wear a hat or cap on your head since half your body heat can be lost through an uncovered head.

* Cover your mouth with a scarf or ski mask to protect your lungs from extreme cold air.

* Mittens snug at the wrist are better than gloves because fingers maintain more warmth when they touch each other.

Physical Exertion

Cold temperatures put an extra strain on your heart. Heavy exertion, such as snow shoveling, clearing debris or pushing a vehicle, increase your risk of a heart attack.

To avoid over exertion problems, remember these tips:

- Stay warm, dress warm and **SLOW DOWN** when working outdoors.

- Take frequent rests to avoid over exertion.

- If you feel chest pain… **STOP** and seek help immediately.

Some Cold Facts About Ice Safety

For many of us in North Dakota, working or playing on ice of a river or lake is part of winter. Knowing how to do so is a matter of life or death. When is ice safe? There really is no sure answer. In fact, ice is probably never 100% safe. You can't judge the strength of ice just by its appearance. Ice strength is based on these factors—age, thickness, temperature, depth of water under the ice, size of the body of water and whether or not the ice is covered with snow.

Some Cold Facts About Ice

New ice is usually stronger than old ice. Four inches of clear, newly formed ice may support one person on foot, while a foot or more of old partially-thawed ice may not.

Ice seldom freezes uniformly. It may be a foot thick in one location and only a few inches thick just a few feet away.

Ice formed over flowing water and currents is often dangerous. Ice near streams, bridges, and culverts is usually weaker due to the undermining effect of fasters current.

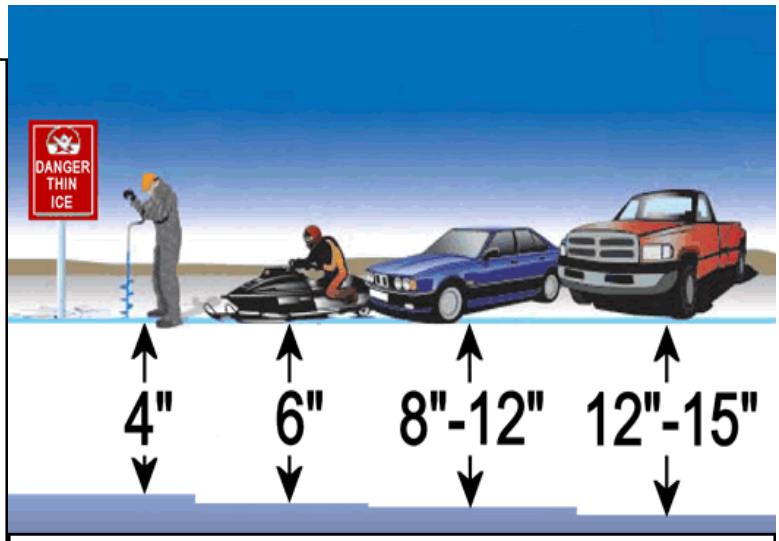
The insulating effect of snow slows down the freezing process. The extra weight also reduces how much weight the ice can support. Also, ice near shore can be weaker than ice that is farther out.

Booming and cracking ice isn't necessarily dangerous. It only means that the ice is expanding and contracting as the temperature changes.

Check with a local resort or bait shop. They can advise you of current ice conditions and any known traditional unsafe areas before heading out on the ice.

Driving on Ice

Don't drive on ice if you can possibly avoid it.



If you must, follow these common sense tips:

Stay off the ice at night, especially during a snowfall. If that's unavoidable, be very cautious and drive slowly since holes can open up very quickly. If you drive too fast you may not be able to stop in time.

Be prepared to bail out in a hurry! Ice safety experts recommend that you have your seat belt unfastened and a window rolled down or door slightly ajar to speed up an escape.

Your Final Answer?

Remember, common sense is your greatest ally in preventing ice accidents. Five minutes of checking ice from shore, and systemic checks while on the ice can mean the difference between and enjoyable outdoor experience and a tragedy.

Snow Blower Safety

Did you know?
Most snow blower injuries and fatalities happen because the operator did not read the operating and safety instructions.

Most emergency-room related injuries associated with snow blowers involve injuries to the hands or fingers, including amputation. The typical cause? Users tried to clear a clogged auger or discharge chute with their hands. To ensure your safety, please follow these safety guidelines:

√ Read and understand the manufacturer's operating instructions before operating it.
√ **DO NOT** disable the snow blowers operator presence control. Most snow blowers built since 1975 have an operator presence control that causes the snow blower to stop when the operator lets go of the hand controls.
√ Inspect the blower to make sure all safety shields are in place and are not damaged. Tighten any loose nuts, bolts and screws. Before servicing, disconnect the spark plug wire.
√ Add fuel before starting the engine. Never fuel an engine while it is running or hot.
√ Dress properly for the weather conditions. Do not wear loose fitting clothing while operating machinery.
√ Make sure all people, pets and debris are out of the way before you begin blowing snow.
√ Pre-plan the placement of discharged snow. Do not direct the discharge chute toward windows, parked cars, roadways, or travel paths. Remember that objects other than snow will usually be thrown further than the snow discharge.
√ When operating for extended periods of time, plug or muff type hearing protection should be used.
√ **DO NOT** leave snow blower unattended when it is running. Shut off the blower and remove the key.
√ If the chute or auger plugs up, follow these steps:

- Turn off the machine.
- Remove the spark plug wire.
- Use a stick, broom handle, or tool provided with the blower to free the snow or debris from the chute/auger.
- **Never, ever, reach into or place your hands in the auger housing or chute.**

For Electric Models: Use an outdoor rated extension cord and an outlet with Ground Fault Circuit Interruption (GFCI) protection. Make sure power cords are kept safely away from the spinning auger while blowing snow.

What If I Become Stranded?

If your vehicle becomes stalled or stopped, keep cool, and think the problem through. Decide on what is the best and safest thing to do.

* If possible, pull off the highway, turn on hazard lights and hang a distress flag from the antenna or window.

* Remain in your vehicle where rescuers are more likely to find you. Do not set out on foot unless you can see a building close by where you know you can take shelter. Disorientation and confusion comes very quickly in blowing and drifting snow.

* Use your cellular phone to call for help.

* Run the engine and heater about 10 minutes each hour to keep warm, conserve fuel and reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. When the engine is running, open a window slightly for ventilation and periodically clear snow from the exhaust pipe. *This will protect you from carbon monoxide poisoning and ensure the engine stays running.*

* Turn the dome light on when the engine is running so work crews or rescuers can see you.

* Exercise periodically to maintain body heat, but avoid over exertion.

* If there is more than one person in the car, take turns sleeping.

* Drink fluids (avoid alcohol) to avoid dehydration. Melt snow before using it for drinking water. Eating snow lowers your body temperature, increasing risk of hypothermia.

* If stranded in a remote area, stomp large letters in an open area spelling out HELP or SOS to attract the attention of rescue personnel who may be searching with an airplane.

If Caught In A Winter Storm...What Should You Do?

Outside

Find Shelter:

- Try to stay dry.
- Cover all exposed body parts.

No Shelter:

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

Melt snow for drinking water:

- Eating snow will lower your body temperature.

In a Vehicle

Stay in the vehicle:

- You will become quickly disoriented in wind driven snow and cold.
- Run the engine about 10 minutes each hour for heat.
- Open the window for a little fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.

Be visible to rescuers:

- Turn on dome light when running the engine.
- Tie a bright colored cloth, to your antenna or door.
- After the snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help.

Exercise:

- From time to time, move arms, legs, fingers and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.

Inside

Stay inside:

- When using alternate heat from a fireplace, wood stove. space heater, etc., use fire safeguards and properly ventilate.

No heat:

- Close off unneeded rooms.
- Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
- 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, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid over-heating, perspiration and subsequent chills.

Cold Weather Care for the Elderly

As people become older, the body becomes less able to respond to long periods of exposure to cold winters. In cold weather, some older people may develop accidental hypothermia, which is a drop in internal body temperature that can be fatal if not detected and treated properly.

Accidental Hypothermia

Accidental hypothermia may occur in anyone who is exposed to severe cold without protection. Some older people develop accidental hypothermia after exposure to relatively mild cold temperatures. Those elderly persons most likely to develop accidental hypothermia are: the chronically ill, the poor who are unable to afford enough heating fuel and those who do not take the usual measures to keep warm. The small number of aged persons who's body temperature regulation is defective face the greatest danger. For some unknown reasons, these people do not feel cold or shiver, and thus cannot produce enough body heat when they need it.

If your temperature is below 95°F or does not register on a thermometer, seek emergency medical help. Other signs to look for include: an unusual change in appearance or behavior during cold weather; slow and sometimes irregular heartbeat; slurred speech; shallow or very slow breathing; sluggishness; and confusion. Treatment consists of warming the person under a medical professionals supervision, preferably in a clinic or hospital.

Protective Measures

There is no scientific evidence for recommending adequate room temperatures for elderly people. However, setting the heat between 65°F° to 70°F in living and sleeping areas should be adequate in most cases. Sick people may need more heat. Measures you can take to prevent accidental hypothermia include:

- Dress warmly even when indoors, eat enough food and stay as active as possible.
- Because hypothermia may start while sleeping, keep warm in bed by wearing enough clothing and blankets.
- If you take medicine to treat anxiety, depression, nervousness, or nausea, ask your doctor whether the medication might affect the control of body temperature.
- Ask friends or neighbors to look in on elderly persons once or twice a day, particularly during a cold weather spell.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Also referred to as Fuel Assistance, this program provides benefits to low-income individuals and families to assist with the payment of heating costs. The program is available October through May of each year. Seasonal benefits are based on household size, income, assets, housing type and size, and fuel used to heat the dwelling. For more information contact the Bowman-Slope Social Services Office at 523-3285.

Winter Safety for Schools

Children can be especially susceptible to the extreme conditions associated with winter weather. Their youthful enthusiasm often takes over when common sense and safety should prevail. Even when they are cold, wet, or exhausted, they often are not conscious of the potential impact these conditions pose.

School administrators and teachers need to be sensitive to the dangers winter weather can pose to children and be prepared. Winter weather procedures and practices need to be established before the onset of the winter season. When formulating a school winter weather safety plan consider the following:

- The best source for the latest information is a NOAA weather radio (see Page 3 of this guide). Local radio or television should also be monitored.

- All schools need to have a functional winter weather plan in regard to closures due to snow, ice, or extreme cold.

- During the winter months, guidelines need to be established regarding outside recess periods. Temperatures and wind chills need to be monitored and criteria set as to when outside recess will be allowed.

- School bus drivers should receive extra training on driving during winter weather. Snow and ice can often accumulate quickly and unexpectedly on roads creating dangerous driving conditions.

- With many households having two working parents today, it may be necessary for some children to be brought to school early. Schools should make provisions to allow children inside schools buildings as early as possible during cold weather.

Protecting Your Pets

Winter weather poses special risks to pets. Give your pet a safer, healthier cold weather season by following these tips:

- A temperature of 10°F or below is too cold for your pets to tolerate. The physical stress of cold temperatures can make pets more susceptible to illness or infection.
- Keep indoor pets in a dry-warm area free of drafts. Elevate your pet's bed off the floor.
- Provide outdoor dogs or cats with a dry, insulated pet house or shelter out of the wind. Don't use metal water/food dishes outside; your pet's tongue can stick to the frozen metal. Staying warm demands extra calories, so increase your pet's food intake, especially protein. Bring your pet inside if the wind chill or other weather conditions become severe.
- Remove ice, salt, and caked mud from your pet's paws and coat at once. Contact your veterinarian immediately if you suspect your pet has frostbite. Frostbitten skin may turn reddish, white, or gray, and it may be scaly or sloughing.
- If your dog is a swimmer, keep it on a leash around open water or unstable ice. Hypothermia can set in quickly and the dog may not be able to get out of the water. Don't take the chance of risking your dogs life, or yours.
- Cats and kittens often nap on car engines because of the warmth. Knock on the hood or honk the horn, then wait a few minutes before starting the car.
- Pets like the smell and taste of antifreeze, but even a small amount can kill them. Thoroughly clean up spills at once. Tightly close containers and store them where pets cannot get to them.
- Holiday decorations can hurt pets. Cover or tack down electrical cords. Keep tinsel and glass ornaments out of reach. Read warnings on items like spray-on snow. Never put ribbon around a pets neck or allow it to play with plastic or foil wrappings or six-pack beverage holders.
- Keep your pet on its regular diet. Holiday treats, such as chocolate and bones, can be harmful or toxic.
- Many plants, including Christmas rose, holly, mistletoe, philodendron, poinsettia, and dieffenbachia are toxic to pets. Keep them out of your pets reach.
- Always have fresh, clean water available.

Protection Tips for Livestock Producers

Shelter is of primary importance for livestock during a severe blizzard. Animals need protection from the wind chill factor as well as snow and ice that may cover their eyes and nostrils. Animals running in brush country or lowlands with timber usually survive if feed, water, and salt are readily available. When put into effect, the following ideas, will provide livestock with protection during a blizzard.

- Move livestock, especially young livestock, into sheltered areas. Shelter belts, properly oriented and laid out, provide better protection for range animals than shed type shelters.
- Sheds may cause cattle to overcrowd, with consequent overheating and respiratory disorders.
- Well-fed stock with a reserve nutrition supply will weather a blizzard much better than a herd which is fed only the minimum. It is recommended that livestock producers check with their county extension agent to determine the correct feed portions to ensure an adequate reserve.
- Haul extra feed to feeding areas before the storm arrives. Storm duration is the largest determination of livestock losses. If the storm lasts more than 48 hours, emergency feeding methods may be required. Concentrates in the form of pellets or cakes are excellent for providing emergency rations.
- Since livestock are subject to dehydration when left without water, the availability of water during and after a blizzard becomes very important. Because cattle cannot eat enough snow to satisfy their water intake, stockmen are advised to use water tank heaters to provide livestock with water.
- After a blizzard of several days duration, cattle that have been without salt frequently suffer from salt starvation. Take care, however, that livestock do not get too much salt during the recovery period.

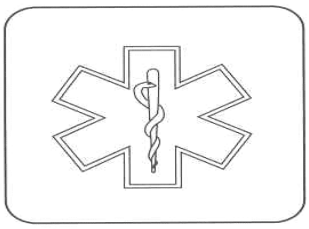
Emergency Phone Numbers

My Family Name: _____

My Phone Number: _____

My Address: _____

My Town: _____



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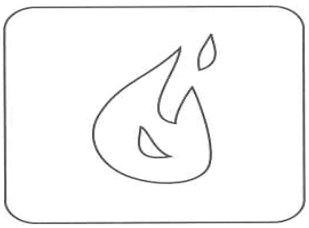
Ambulance



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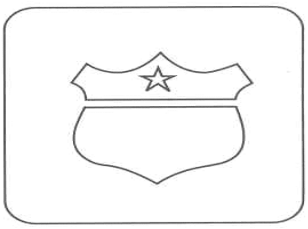
Fire



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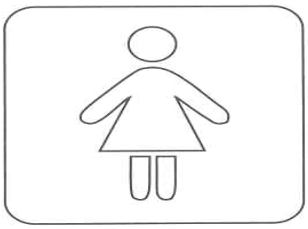
Police/Sheriff



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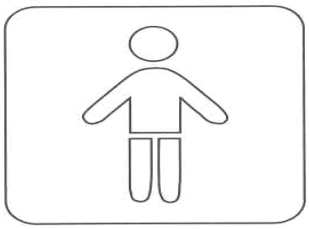
Mother



_____
Father

_____
Other

Winter Weather Preparedness Fun Sheet

P S F K E E P A H E A D O F T H E S S T
S R U L O R M W I T H A N O A A W R E A
T R E R A H E R R A D I O S W V W O Y X
U V E P V S S W A R N I N G S I S T R R
V Y G T A I H B N V D O U C N E O A I F
R B V U A R V L C J W L W T I X W R D A
H N L B M E E A I B F Z E R K P Y E O N
Y I R I A Z H D L G H R O F J O Z N O N
H H H F Z W A O N K H S L T C S S E F A
S T O R M Z W Q N E I T E C X U A G B L
W A T C H E A E O V S T U C N R F Q B P
O T O X R K G R D C G S F P H E E D J Y
R E H T A E W A D K M X D P R E T A X L
E M E R G E N C Y N U M B E R S Y N X I
I W D L H I G H W I N D I H U V G G C M
O U T L O O K H S D A O R Y C I U E D A
R A D I O S Y K Q S V M O E N U I R O F
R S C H W L L I H C D N I W T F D O L U
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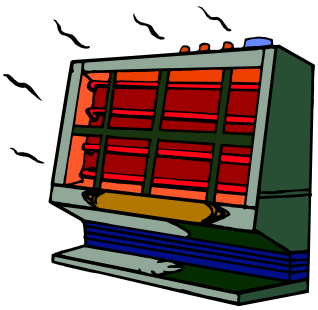
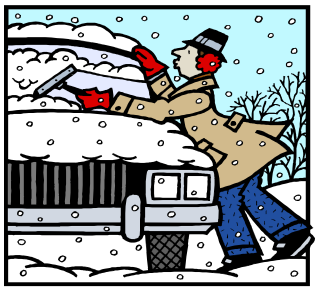


ADVISORIES
BLIZZARD
DANGEROUS
EMERGENCY NUMBERS
EXPOSURE
FAMILY PLAN
FLASHLIGHT
FLU
FOOD
FUEL
GENERATORS
HEATERS
HIGHWIND
ICY ROADS
OUTLOOK
PREPAREDNESS
RADIOS SAFETY GUIDE SNOWBLOWER STORM
SURVIVAL KIT
WARNINGS
WATCH
WATER WEATHER WINDCHILL
WINTER

COMPLETE THE WORD FIND PUZZLE. THEN USE THE UNCIRCLED LETTERS WITH IN THE FIRST THREE ROWS TO SOLVE THE SPECIAL MESSAGE BELOW.

ENJOY AND REMEMBER TO STAY SAFE!

(Answer to Puzzle is in the box on Bottom of Page 3)



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Additional Sources of Information

American Red Cross—http://www.redcross.org
The American red cross has many materials available to citizens wanting to expand their knowledge of disaster preparedness information.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention—
http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/
This web site focuses on winter weather tips and facts for families to take into considerations as they prepare their family winter weather preparedness plans.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)—http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/
The CERT Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization and basic first aid and medical assistance. CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional first responders are not immediately available.

Ready America/Business/Kids—http://www.ready.gov
A web site sponsored by FEMA and Citizen Corps to assist families, businesses, and children to be prepared.

Home Safety Council—http://www.homesafetycouncil.org/SafetyGuide/sg_winter_w001.asp
The Home Safety Council (HSC) is the only national nonprofit organization solely dedicated to preventing home related injuries that result in nearly 20,000 deaths and 21 million medical visits on average each year. Through national programs, partnerships and the support of volunteers, HSC educates people of all ages to be safer in and around their homes.

ND Department of Transportation—http://www.dot.nd.gov/
A source of information regarding current road conditions and travel information as you plan your winter travels throughout North Dakota.

ND Department of Agriculture—http://www.agdepartment.com/
A source of information for livestock producers regarding animal health and safety issues.

ND Department of Emergency Services—http://www.nd.gov/des/
This state agency provides communications and coordination support to local and tribal governments for the planning, preparedness, response and recovery to local disasters. This agency coordinates deployment of regional mutual aid assets, as well as activation of state and federal resources during declared disasters.

National Weather Service—http://nws.noaa.gov
The National Weather Service (NWS) provides weather, hydrologic and climate forecasts and warning for the United States, its territories and adjacent waters and ocean areas.

U.S. Department of Education—http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan/
This web site is designed to be a one-stop shop that provides school leaders with information they need to plan for any emergency, including natural disasters, violent incidents, and terrorist acts.