

Be prepared

A Checklist for Winter Readiness

Before cold weather strikes, you need to winterize your home or business. Here's a checklist to help you get ready:

- ✓ Install storm shutters, doors and windows. You also can cover windows with plastic from the inside to provide an extra layer of insulation.
- ✓ Caulk and weather-strip doors and windowsills.
- ✓ If necessary, insulate walls and attics to reduce the building's power demands for heat.
- ✓ Repair roof leaks and check the structural ability of the roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow, water or ice.
- ✓ Consider buying emergency heating equipment, such as a wood- or coal-burning stove or a kerosene heater.
- ✓ If you use a wood stove, be sure it's properly vented and in good working order. For a kerosene heater, use only the correct fuel. Properly ventilate the area to be used and refuel the unit outdoors once it has cooled.
- ✓ Know how to shut off the main water valve to your building and how to shut off and drain outside faucets. Keep a wrench near the valves.
- ✓ Install heat tape on water pipes. You also can protect pipes by letting faucets drip a little and by wrapping pipes in insulation or layers of newspaper, and then covering them with plastic.
- ✓ Store a first aid kit, a non-electric can opener, a radio, a flashlight and extra batteries where you can get to them easily, even in the dark.
- ✓ Store extra drinking water and foods that require little or no preparation.
- ✓ Get a NOAA Weather Radio to monitor severe weather.
- ✓ If you have an electric garage door opener, learn how to open the door manually in case the power fails.
- ✓ Ensure that any outbuildings that shelter animals can withstand wind, heavy snow and ice.
- ✓ Keep your cars fueled and make sure they have the proper level of antifreeze. Each vehicle should be stocked with a blanket, jumper cables, a tow rope, sand (or kitty litter) and a shovel.
- ✓ Consider buying a cell phone. Cell phones often work when other phone lines go down.

- ✓ Don't close doors or windows on extension cords, or mount lights in a way that can damage a cord's insulation.
- ✓ Stay away from power lines leading from utility poles.
- ✓ Fasten lights to trees, walls or other firm supports. Use insulated staples (not tacks or nails) to hold strings of lights in place, or run the strings through hooks.
- ✓ Turn off holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house.