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Public Information Statement

National Weather Service Boston/Norton MA

707 AM EST Mon Nov 2 2020

...Winter Weather Preparedness Week...

The National Weather Service has declared the week of November 2 to November 6 as Winter Weather Preparedness Week. We will be issuing public information statements concerning many aspects of winter weather and winter weather preparedness. In advance, we want to thank our friends in the media for helping to bring this important safety information to the attention of their viewers, listeners and readers.

Part 1 of 5 - Winter Weather Basics:

For those who live in New England, winter weather is a part of life from November through March. Snow, sleet, freezing rain, cold temperatures and cold wind chill temperatures will be common occurrences soon. While most of the time these weather elements are only a nuisance to our daily routines, at times they can produce hazardous or life-threatening situations for those who are not prepared.

To alert the public to potentially dangerous winter weather events or situations, the National Weather Service issues outlooks, watches, warnings and advisories. You should keep the following general definitions in mind.

Outlook - A Hazardous Weather Outlook is issued daily by National Weather Service offices across the country to alert the public to the potential for any hazardous weather during the next 7 days, including significant winter storms, high wind, coastal flooding, and extreme temperatures. Due to the uncertainty in predicting the strength and path of a winter storm more than several days in advance, the exact impact on the area (if any) will not be known. In addition, National Weather Service offices may issue Special Weather Statements highlighting the potential impact of a major winter storm.

NWS product - Hazardous Weather Outlook.

Watch - Watches are issued to alert the public that dangerous

winter conditions are possible within the next 24 to 48 hours, when forecaster confidence reaches 50 percent. Products include, Winter Storm Watches, High Wind Watches, and Coastal Flood Watches.

Warning - Warnings are issued to alert the public that dangerous winter conditions are likely to occur within the next 36 hours or are occurring. Forecaster confidence has to reach 80 percent or higher. Products include, Winter Storm Warning, Ice Storm Warning, Blizzard Warning, High Wind Warning, Wind Chill Warning, and Coastal Flood Warning.

Advisory- Advisories are issued to alert the public that winter conditions are expected to cause a significant inconvenience and may be hazardous. If caution is exercised, these situations should not be life-threatening. Products include, Winter Weather Advisory, Wind Advisory and Wind Chill Advisory.

Specific thresholds for advisories, watches and warnings vary by state. They can be found at <https://www.weather.gov/box/criteria>

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Public Information Statement
National Weather Service Boston/Norton MA
647 AM EST Tue Nov 3 2020

...Winter Weather Preparedness Week - Home Preparations...

The National Weather Service has declared the week of November 2 to November 6 as Winter Weather Preparedness Week. The following is part 2 of a 5-part series of informational statements.

Part 2 - Preparing For The Storm At Home

At home and at work, the primary concerns from a powerful winter storm are loss of heat, power, and telephone service. Also a shortage of supplies can occur if storm conditions occur for more than a day. Here are some suggestions for safety preparations before and during a winter storm.

Have available:

1. Flashlights with extra batteries on hand.
2. Battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio and a portable radio to be able to receive emergency information. These may be your only links to the outside.
3. Extra food and water. Have high-energy food, such as dried fruit, nuts, and granola bars, and food requiring no cooking or refrigeration.
4. Extra medicine and baby items.
5. First aid supplies.
6. Heating fuel. Be sure to refuel before you are empty. Fuel carriers may not reach you for days after a winter storm.
7. Emergency heat source such as a fireplace, wood stove or space heater. Proper ventilation is essential in order to avoid a deadly build-up of carbon monoxide. Fire is also a major risk when using such heating sources. Keep in mind that fire departments may not be able to reach your location during a winter storm.
8. Fire extinguisher, smoke alarm, and carbon monoxide detector, tested regularly.
9. Plenty of food, water and shelter for pets.

If you lose your heat, seal off unused rooms by stuffing towels in the cracks under the doors. At night, cover windows with extra blankets or sheets. Food provides your body with energy for producing its own heat. Keep your body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration. Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers occasionally to avoid overheating, perspiration, and subsequent chill.

To keep pipes from freezing, wrap them in insulation or layers of newspapers, covering the newspapers with plastic to keep out moisture. Allow a trickle of warm water to run from a faucet that is farthest from your water meter or one that has frozen in the past. This will keep the water moving so that it cannot freeze. Learn how to shut off your water if a pipe bursts.

If pipes freeze, remove insulation, completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes or wrap them with towels soaked in hot water, starting where they are most exposed to the cold. A hand-held hair dryer, used with caution, also works well.

Be a good neighbor. Check with the elderly or disabled relatives and friends to ensure their safety.

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Public Information Statement
National Weather Service Boston/Norton MA
846 AM EST Wed Nov 4 2020

...Winter Weather Preparedness Week - Vehicle Preparations...

The National Weather Service has declared the week of November 2 to November 6 as Winter Weather Preparedness Week. The following is part 3 of a 5-part series of informational statements.

Part 3 - Preparing your vehicle for the storm.

Ideally, you should plan your travel and check the latest weather reports in order to avoid the storm altogether. Since this is not always possible, here are some suggestions for safety preparations in motor vehicles.

First of all, you should check and fully winterize your vehicle before the winter season begins, including anti-freeze levels and tire tread.

You should carry a winter storm survival kit in your car. This kit should include:

1. Mobile phone with charger and batteries.
2. Blankets and sleeping bags.
3. Flashlight with extra batteries.
4. First-aid kit.
5. Knife

6. High-calorie, non-perishable food.
7. Extra clothing to keep dry.
8. Large empty can to use as emergency toilet. Tissues and paper towels for sanitary purposes.
9. Small can and waterproof matches to melt snow for drinking water.
10. Sack of sand or cat litter for traction.
11. Shovel.
12. Windshield scraper and brush.
13. Tool kit.
14. Tow rope.
15. Battery jumper cables.
16. Water container.
17. Compass and road maps.

In addition, keep your gas tank near full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines. Avoid traveling alone. Let someone know your timetable and primary and alternate routes.

If you become caught in a fierce winter storm, it is important to stay in your vehicle. You will become quickly disoriented in wind-driven snow and cold. Run the motor for about 10 minutes each hour for heat, but make sure that the exhaust pipe is not blocked with snow or ice. Open the window a little for fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.

Exercise from time to time, moving arms, legs, fingers, and toes vigorously to keep blood circulating and to keep warm. Avoid overexertion such as shoveling heavy snow, pushing a car, or walking in deep snow. The strain from the combination of cold and hard labor may cause a heart attack.

Be visible to rescuers. Turn on the dome light of your car at night when running the engine. Tie a colored cloth, preferably red, to your antenna or door. After snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate that you need help.

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Public Information Statement
National Weather Service Boston/Norton MA
801 AM EST Thu Nov 5 2020

...Winter Weather Preparedness Week - Part Four...

The National Weather Service has declared the week of November 2 to November 6 as Winter Weather Preparedness Week. The following is part 4 of a 5-part series of informational statements.

Part 4 - Frostbite and Hypothermia

The National Weather Service issues Wind Chill Warnings when the combined effects of wind and temperature feel like 25 below zero in southern New England.

Frostbite is a condition in which the body tissue actually freezes. The most susceptible areas for frostbite include the fingers, toes, nose and ear lobes.

Hypothermia develops when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Warning signs start with shivering and then proceed to include memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. At this point immediate attention is necessary, which includes warming the person properly.

Temperatures do not have to be below freezing for hypothermia to develop. It can develop in elderly people in a cool room with few, if any, warning signs.

In a hypothermic person, cold blood is concentrated in the extremities. If these extremities are warmed too quickly, the cold blood will be released into the central core of the body, possibly lowering the central core temperature to a fatal level. Use the following steps to raise the core temperature of a hypothermic person.

Get the person into dry clothing if their clothes are wet. Put on additional clothing to warm the head and trunk such as a hat and vest. Wrap the person in a warm blanket and be sure that their head and neck are covered. Do not cover their extremities. Give the person warm liquids to drink, but no alcohol, drugs or coffee. Seek immediate medical attention.

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Public Information Statement
National Weather Service Boston/Norton MA
1022 AM EST Fri Nov 6 2020

...Winter Weather Preparedness Week - Part Five...

The National Weather Service has declared the week of November 2 to November 6 as Winter Weather Preparedness Week. The following is Part 5 of a 5-part series of informational statements.

Part 5 - Ice Safety

Freezing Drizzle and Freezing Rain...

Any amount of rain that freezes on contact with roadways or sidewalks can be dangerous. Bridges and overpasses can be particularly dangerous because they freeze before other surfaces. Only one hundredth of an inch of freezing rain caused a 70-car pileup in Worcester on December 1, 2013. However, when ice accumulates to more than one-half inch on power lines, they can be knocked down. Extreme damage to trees, utility poles, and communications towers can occur when 1 to 2 inches of ice accumulates. Power may not be restored for several days.

The National Weather Service issues a Winter Weather Advisory for ice amounts ranging from just a trace on roadways to less than one-half inch. An Ice Storm Warning is issued when ice is expected to accumulate one-half inch or more, with respect to a flat surface.

Black Ice...

The term black ice refers to patchy ice on road surfaces that cannot be easily seen. Often it is clear, with the black road surface visible underneath. This can also be a deadly driving hazard. It is most prevalent during the early morning hours,

especially after snowmelt on the roadways has had a chance to refreeze overnight when the temperature drops below freezing.

Ice Jams...

Long cold spells can cause rivers and lakes to freeze. A rise in the water level or a thaw breaks the ice into large chunks which then become jammed at man made and natural obstructions. Ice jams can act as a dam, resulting in severe flooding, both upstream and downstream of the blockage.

Ice Recreation...

Ice on lakes and streams can become deadly. Before walking, fishing, skiing, snowmobiling or engaging in any other activities on ice, check with your local police, fire, or park department to ensure that safe ice conditions exist. Do not go out on the ice if you see

- cracks or holes in the ice
- flowing water around the edges, just below the surface, or over the top of the ice
- ice that appears to have thawed and refrozen

Beware of ice covered with snow. Snow can insulate ice and keep it strong, but it can also insulate it to keep it from freezing. Snow can hide cracks, weak, and open ice. Also, ice seldom freezes or thaws at a uniform rate. It can be one foot thick in one spot and be only a few inches thick 10 feet away.

If you decide to venture out on the ice, remember the following guidelines.

- Stay off the ice if it less than 2 inches thick.
- For walking, ice skating, or ice fishing, you need 4 or more inches of ice thickness.

Never go onto the ice alone. A friend may be able to rescue you or go for help if you fall through the ice. If a companion falls through the ice and you are unable to reach that person from shore, throw them something like a rope, jumper cables, a tree branch, etc. If that does not help, call 9-1-1 before you also become a victim. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency states that if you fall in, try not to panic. Turn toward the direction from which you came. Place your hands and arms on the unbroken surface, working forward by kicking your feet. Once out, remain lying on the ice and roll away from the hole -- but do not stand. Crawl back to your tracks, keeping your weight distributed until you return to solid ice.

This concludes part 5 of the Winter Weather Preparedness Week.

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