

## CERT Meeting Reminder - October 28, 2024



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### Meeting Reminder

Greetings! This is a meeting reminder for our upcoming meetings... ALL are welcome.

#### **CERT - Business Meeting**

Mon, October 28, 4:00pm – 5:30pm  
Atoka City Hall

#### **CERT Winter Storms**

Mon, October 28, 6:30pm – 9:00pm  
Atoka City Hall

## Munford Celebrate Recap

What a success! Thanks to the leadership of Doug Justice who set up the event for us back in 2023, to the team who produced the result (pictured below), we made quite a number of new contacts. We had a whopping 36 people sign up to learn more about CERT. Of those, 33 provided email addresses and will receive an email on Wednesday thanking them for stopping at our booth and inviting them to the October and November training.

There was a crew that got on-site in the early morning hours of Saturday the 19th to set up our booth. A shout out and thank you to Bob, Tony, and Paul. A lot of pre-work to get to this day had to happen. Special mention to Tony who did all the legwork to get us outfitted with shirts. If you'd like a shirt (or need to pay for the one you got), please reach out to him at 901-490-0447. This shirt forms the basis of a "deployment uniform" for our work in the community.

There were some lessons learned that we can do better at, but mostly a solid success. This is the best hope of CERT... to love on our community, to be our brother's keeper, and help everyone train/prepare for the worst. This takes a special kind of volunteer, with a lot of heart. We had it, hats off to everyone involved, or as the Navy would say, "Bravo Zulu."



## The Importance of Teamwork

Teamwork is one of the most powerful tools available to our CERT program and helps us execute our mission. We leverage the collective strengths of individuals with diverse perspectives, experiences, and personalities. This diversity brings a wealth of ideas and solutions to the table that would not be possible if everyone thought and worked in the same way.

When people with different skill sets, backgrounds, and ways of thinking collaborate, they often complement one another's strengths and compensate for weaknesses, leading to more innovative, well-rounded outcomes. There's incredible power in teamwork. Munford Celebrate was a perfect example. There is no more noble a purpose than to dedicate oneself to serving others. Our team is to serve others, to serve our community, and to become more resilient. Our differences create a synergy where the team becomes more than the sum of its parts and our community benefits from this energy. The best kind of teamwork cultivates an environment of respect, mainly by listening to others, valuing each person's input, and recognizing that everyone has something valuable to offer. Respectful communication allows team members to feel safe sharing their ideas and being vulnerable when needed. Mistakes are inevitable, but how a team responds to these mistakes determines their long-term success.

When team members offer grace—understanding, forgiveness, and support—they create a resilient environment where individuals are encouraged to learn from their errors instead of fearing them. This attitude fosters personal growth and improves collective problem-solving abilities. Grace also promotes emotional safety, allowing team members to continue contributing openly without the fear of judgment or blame when things don't go as planned.

In short, the power of teamwork is magnified by the diversity of perspectives and personalities, and the success of any team hinges on the mutual respect and grace offered to each member. Working in such an environment enables teams to adapt, grow, and thrive even in the face of challenges.

## Winter Storm Survival Kit for Your Car

Winter storms can be unpredictable and dangerous, especially when traveling. If you find yourself stranded in harsh conditions, being prepared with a winter storm survival kit in your car can make all the difference between a minor inconvenience and a life-threatening situation. This guide will help you create a well-rounded survival kit, ensuring you're equipped to handle unexpected weather events on the road.

### 1. Non-Perishable Food and Water

In freezing conditions, your body requires more energy to stay warm, making food and water essential. Pack high-calorie, non-perishable snacks like protein bars, nuts, dried fruits, or even vacuum-sealed emergency rations. Additionally, carry at least one gallon of water per person. Since water may freeze in your car, consider storing it in insulated bottles or using heating methods (like chemical hand warmers) to thaw it if necessary.

### 2. Warm Clothing and Blankets

The first rule of winter survival is to stay warm. Include items such as:

- Thermal blankets or space blankets, which reflect body heat.
- Wool socks, gloves, and hats to protect your extremities from frostbite.
- Extra layers of clothing, such as fleece jackets, waterproof pants, and windbreakers.

Avoid cotton, as it retains moisture and loses its insulating ability when wet. Wool and synthetic fabrics are better choices for retaining heat.

### 3. Emergency Lighting and Communication Tools

Winter storms often bring low visibility, so having a reliable source of light and communication can be critical:

- Flashlights: Opt for LED models with long battery life, and pack extra batteries.
- Headlamps: These allow hands-free use, which is helpful in dark conditions.
- Road flares or reflective triangles: These increase your visibility to other drivers and rescuers.
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio: This will help you stay updated on weather conditions and emergency alerts.

- Portable phone charger: Ideally, include a solar-powered or hand-crank option, as regular chargers may deplete your car's battery.

#### **4. First Aid Kit**

A basic first aid kit is crucial in any emergency situation. Include:

1. Bandages and antiseptic wipes.
2. Gauze pads and adhesive tape.
3. Pain relievers (such as ibuprofen).
4. Medical scissors and tweezers.
5. Hand sanitizer.
6. Any necessary prescription medications.

#### **5. Snow and Ice Removal Tools**

Winter storms can quickly cover your car in snow and ice, making it difficult to move or even open the doors. Your kit should include:

- Ice scraper and snow brush: These are essential for clearing windows and mirrors.
- Collapsible shovel: Use this to dig out snow around your tires or clear a path.
- Cat litter or sand: Spreading either under your tires can help gain traction when stuck in snow or ice.

#### **6. Tools and Car Maintenance Supplies**

If you're stranded for an extended period or trying to get your vehicle moving again, the right tools and supplies can be lifesavers:

- Jumper cables: Cold weather can drain car batteries, making it necessary to jumpstart your vehicle.
- Tire chains: In extreme snow and ice conditions, these improve traction.
- Tow strap: For being pulled out of snowbanks by other drivers or rescue vehicles.
- Multi-tool or Swiss Army knife: This provides a variety of tools for different situations.
- Duct tape: Useful for temporary fixes.

#### **7. Heating Sources**

It's essential to stay warm without relying solely on your car's engine, which could run out of fuel or emit harmful carbon monoxide if the exhaust pipe is blocked. Include:

- Hand and foot warmers: These small, portable packets provide hours of heat.
- Candle-powered heater: A metal can and candles can generate some warmth in an enclosed vehicle.
- Lighters and waterproof matches: To start a fire if necessary, outside of the vehicle.

#### **8. Safety and Shelter Items**

If you're stranded in a severe storm, sheltering in place might be your best option. Ensure you have:

- Plastic tarp and duct tape: These can help create an additional layer of insulation in the car or as an emergency shelter.
- Whistle: This can alert rescuers to your location if you're unable to call for help.
- Plastic bags: Useful for waste disposal or waterproofing.

#### **9. Documents and Important Information**

Keep copies of important documents in a waterproof bag, including:

- Driver's license and insurance information.
- Emergency contact numbers.
- Roadside assistance contact details.

#### **10. Additional Safety Tips**

- Keep your gas tank at least half full during the winter months to avoid freezing in the fuel lines and to ensure enough fuel for emergencies.
- Check your car's battery, tires, and fluid levels regularly before venturing out in winter conditions.
- If stranded, stay with your vehicle, as it provides shelter and increases your chances of being found by rescuers. Only leave if you're absolutely certain about the proximity of shelter or help.

- Make sure the exhaust pipe is clear to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning if you need to run the engine for warmth.

## **Conclusion**

Having a well-prepared winter storm survival kit in your car can provide peace of mind and may even save your life in extreme weather conditions. Ensure you check and replenish the kit regularly, especially before winter hits. Being prepared for the worst ensures you're ready to make it through any storm safely.

# **Prepare Your Home for a Winter Storm**

Winter storms can bring extreme cold, heavy snow, ice, and power outages, making it essential to prepare your home in advance to keep your family safe and comfortable. Here's a comprehensive guide on what you can do around the house to get ready for a winter storm.

## **1. Insulate and Weatherproof Your Home**

The first step in preparing for a winter storm is ensuring your home can retain heat and keep the cold air out. Here are some key areas to focus on:

- **Seal windows and doors:** Use weather stripping or caulk around doors and windows to prevent drafts. Installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic film can further reduce heat loss.
- **Insulate pipes:** Cold temperatures can cause water pipes to freeze and burst. Insulate exposed pipes, especially those in unheated areas like basements, attics, and garages. You can also open cabinet doors to allow warm air to circulate around indoor plumbing.
- **Check attic insulation:** Proper insulation in your attic prevents heat from escaping and ice dams from forming on the roof. Make sure your attic is well-insulated and ventilated.
- **Install draft stoppers:** Place draft stoppers at the base of exterior doors to block cold air from entering.
- **Close off unused rooms:** Close vents and doors to rooms you don't use often. This will concentrate heat in the main living areas, helping your home stay warm more efficiently.

## **2. Prepare Your Heating Systems**

Ensuring your home stays warm during a winter storm is crucial. Here's how to get your heating system ready:

- **Inspect and maintain your furnace:** Before the storm hits, have your furnace inspected and serviced by a professional to ensure it's in good working order. Change the air filters regularly to improve efficiency.
- **Test your heating system:** Run your heating system early in the season to identify any issues. Make sure the thermostat is working correctly.
- **Stock up on heating fuel:** If you have a fireplace, wood stove, or oil heating system, ensure you have enough wood, propane, or oil to last several days in case deliveries are delayed by the storm.
- **Install carbon monoxide detectors:** If you use a gas furnace or a generator, install carbon monoxide detectors in your home. Make sure they are working properly, as improper ventilation during storms can lead to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

## **3. Prepare for Power Outages**

Winter storms frequently cause power outages, which can last for hours or even days. Here are steps to take to be ready:

- **Backup generator:** Consider investing in a backup generator to keep essential appliances, such as your heating system, refrigerator, and lights, running during an outage. Make sure the generator is well-maintained and follow safety guidelines, such as running it outside in a well-ventilated area.
- **Flashlights and batteries:** Stock up on flashlights, extra batteries, and lanterns. Avoid using candles, as they pose a fire hazard.
- **Portable power banks:** Charge portable power banks in advance to keep your phones and small electronic devices powered during an outage.

- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio: Have a battery-powered or hand-crank radio on hand to stay informed about weather updates and emergency instructions if the power is out.

#### **4. Stock Up on Supplies**

A winter storm can make it difficult to leave the house, so it's important to have essential supplies on hand:

- Non-perishable food: Keep a stock of canned goods, dry foods, and snacks that don't require cooking. Make sure you have a manual can opener.
- Water: Store at least one gallon of water per person per day for drinking and sanitation purposes. Plan for at least three days, but more if possible.
- Medication and first aid supplies: Refill any essential medications and make sure your first aid kit is fully stocked.
- Baby and pet supplies: If you have babies or pets, ensure you have enough formula, baby food, diapers, and pet food to last through the storm.

#### **5. Protect Your Plumbing**

Frozen pipes are a common problem during winter storms. To prevent costly damage, take these precautions:

- Let faucets drip: During extreme cold, let cold water drip from faucets, especially those connected to exposed pipes. This keeps water moving and reduces the risk of freezing.
- Disconnect outdoor hoses: Drain and store outdoor hoses, and turn off outdoor faucets by closing the indoor shut-off valve.
- Install pipe insulation: Insulating pipes in cold or unheated areas will protect them from freezing temperatures.

#### **6. Prepare Your Roof and Gutters**

Heavy snow and ice accumulation can damage your roof or cause leaks. Here's how to safeguard your roof:

- Clean your gutters: Before the storm, clean out gutters and downspouts to prevent ice dams, which can cause water to back up and leak into your home.
- Trim tree branches: Remove any overhanging branches that could snap under the weight of snow or ice and cause damage to your roof or windows.
- Inspect your roof: Check for missing or damaged shingles that could allow water to seep in. Repair any issues before the storm hits.

#### **7. Create an Emergency Plan**

It's important to have a plan in place in case you need to evacuate or handle an emergency during a storm:

- Emergency contacts: Make a list of emergency contact numbers, including family members, neighbors, and local authorities. Ensure everyone in your household knows who to contact in case of an emergency.
- Family communication plan: Have a plan for how family members will communicate if they are separated during the storm.
- Emergency kit: Prepare a basic emergency kit that includes first aid supplies, blankets, flashlights, non-perishable food, and bottled water.

#### **8. Stay Informed**

Winter storms can change rapidly, so stay informed about weather conditions and forecasts:

- Monitor weather reports: Use weather apps or a NOAA weather radio to stay updated on storm warnings and alerts in your area. If you are a Facebook user, the National Weather Service out of Memphis publishes frequent alerts during weather events.
- Sign up for emergency alerts: Register for emergency alerts from your local government or utility company to receive updates about power outages, road closures, and other hazards.

#### **9. Prepare for Outdoor Safety**

If you need to venture outside during or after a storm, ensure you're prepared:

- Snow and ice removal tools: Keep a snow shovel, ice scraper, and rock salt or sand handy for clearing driveways, walkways, and stairs.

- Winter clothing: Stock up on warm clothing, including waterproof boots, gloves, hats, and heavy coats, to protect yourself from cold and frostbite.

## **Conclusion**

Preparing your home for a winter storm can prevent damage, keep your family safe, and ensure you remain comfortable until conditions improve. By taking proactive measures like insulating your home, stocking up on essential supplies, and preparing for power outages, you'll be well-equipped to weather the storm. Don't wait until the last minute—start your preparations now to stay safe and secure during the winter months.

## **Advanced Topics - Winter Storms**

In addition to preparing your home and vehicle, there are several other critical aspects people should be aware of when it comes to winter storms. Being aware of these factors can improve your safety and help you navigate the challenges that come with severe winter weather. Discussing these issues with your neighbor creates better awareness when dealing with the results of winter storms.

### **1. Understanding the Types of Winter Weather Alerts**

Familiarize yourself with different weather alerts issued by the National Weather Service or other local agencies. Each type of alert signifies varying levels of severity:

- Winter Storm Watch: Issued when significant winter weather (heavy snow, ice, or sleet) is expected within 12 to 48 hours. It means conditions are favorable, but the storm's exact path and impact are uncertain.
- Winter Storm Warning: Issued when severe winter weather is imminent or occurring, typically within the next 24 hours. Take immediate action to prepare and stay indoors if possible.
- Blizzard Warning: Issued when heavy snow and strong winds (35 mph or more) will reduce visibility to less than ¼ mile for at least three hours. This can create life-threatening conditions.
- Ice Storm Warning: Alerts for freezing rain and significant ice accumulations, which can cause widespread power outages and treacherous travel conditions.
- Wind Chill Advisory/Warning: Extreme cold and wind can lead to dangerously low wind chills, increasing the risk of frostbite and hypothermia.

### **2. The Risk of Frostbite and Hypothermia**

Severe winter storms bring freezing temperatures, increasing the risk of frostbite and hypothermia.

Understanding the symptoms and how to protect yourself is vital:

- Frostbite: A condition where skin and tissue freeze, often affecting extremities like fingers, toes, nose, and ears. Symptoms include numbness, white or pale skin, and a hard or waxy appearance. To prevent frostbite, cover exposed skin, wear insulated gloves, hats, and multiple layers of clothing.
- Hypothermia: Occurs when the body's core temperature drops below 95°F (35°C). Symptoms include shivering, confusion, slurred speech, drowsiness, and slow breathing. Hypothermia is a medical emergency, so call for help immediately if you suspect someone has it. In the meantime, warm the person gradually by wrapping them in blankets and providing warm liquids.

### **3. Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Risks**

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning is a significant risk during winter storms, especially during power outages when people may use alternative heating sources, such as generators, propane heaters, or charcoal grills. CO is a colorless, odorless gas that can be deadly in enclosed spaces. Here are ways to stay safe:

- Never use generators or grills indoors: These devices should be used only in well-ventilated outdoor areas.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors: Ensure they are functioning properly before the storm hits, and place them on every level of your home, particularly near sleeping areas.

- Clear snow from exhaust vents: If you're using a furnace, water heater, or other gas-powered appliances, make sure that snow or ice isn't blocking the exhaust pipes, which could cause CO to back up into your home.

#### **4. Driving During Winter Storms**

If you must drive during or immediately after a winter storm, be aware of the heightened risks:

- Stay off the roads if possible: The safest option is to avoid travel during winter storms unless absolutely necessary.
- Drive slowly and cautiously: Icy roads significantly reduce tire traction, increasing stopping distances. Slow down, use lower gears for better control, and avoid sudden braking.
- Beware of black ice: Black ice is invisible but extremely dangerous because it forms a thin, clear layer of ice that can cause your vehicle to lose control.
- Don't forget to keep an emergency kit in your car

#### **5. Power Outages and Home Heating Safety**

Power outages are common during winter storms due to heavy snow and ice bringing down power lines.

Without power, heating your home becomes a challenge, and safety must be a top priority:

- Use space heaters carefully: If using space heaters, make sure they are placed at least three feet away from anything flammable and never leave them unattended.
- Do not use ovens or stoves to heat your home: This can lead to carbon monoxide buildup or fire hazards.
- Monitor indoor temperature: Keep track of how cold it's getting indoors. If temperatures drop dangerously low and you have no heat source, consider going to a designated warming center or calling for emergency help.

#### **6. Fire Hazards**

Winter storms can increase the risk of house fires as people turn to alternative heating methods. Take precautions to minimize fire risks:

- Avoid candle use: Candles are a common source of accidental house fires during power outages. Use battery-powered lights or lanterns instead.
- Maintain fireplaces: If using a fireplace, make sure it's clean and vented properly. Keep flammable materials like furniture, curtains, and rugs at a safe distance.
- Keep fire extinguishers accessible: Make sure you have working fire extinguishers in key areas of your home.

#### **7. Roof and Structural Damage**

Heavy snowfall and ice accumulation can cause damage to your home, particularly your roof. Be aware of the following risks:

- Roof collapse: Flat or low-pitched roofs are especially vulnerable to collapse under the weight of heavy snow. Use a roof rake to safely remove snow, especially after a significant storm.
- Ice dams: Ice dams form when snow on the roof melts and refreezes at the edges, blocking drainage and causing water to leak into your home. Prevent ice dams by ensuring proper insulation and ventilation in your attic.

#### **8. Staying Connected**

During winter storms, communication is vital. Here's how to ensure you stay connected:

- Charge devices in advance: Fully charge phones, tablets, and laptops before the storm hits. Have portable power banks available as backup.
- Be prepared for the lack of cellular service.
- Notify family and friends: Let loved ones know your plans before and during the storm. Check on elderly relatives and neighbors who may need assistance.
- Stay informed: Use NOAA weather radios or weather apps to keep up with changing conditions and emergency updates.

#### **9. Mental and Emotional Health**

Winter storms can be stressful, particularly if you're isolated due to power outages or travel restrictions.

Prepare for how to cope with long periods indoors:



- Keep entertainment options: Stock up on books, games, or other activities to help pass the time.
- Stay calm and be patient: Recognize that things like power restoration and snow removal take time during major storms. Stay in communication with neighbors or friends and offer help if you can.

**Conclusion**

Being aware of the broader risks associated with winter storms—ranging from carbon monoxide poisoning to mental health effects—is crucial to ensuring your safety. Along with preparing your home and vehicle, stay informed and cautious during these extreme weather events. With proper planning, you can mitigate many of the dangers posed by winter storms and keep your family safe.