



PREPARING FOR WINTER IN THE NORTHWEST

Eastside Fire & Rescue

www.eastsidefire-rescue.org



Winter storms in the Northwest can range from drizzly days to heavy rains. We can even experience moderate snow over a few hours or blizzard conditions in our mountain passes. The time to prepare is before the rain, snow, or ice starts to fall. It is important to understand the warning terms:

- A **winter storm watch** indicates severe winter weather may affect your area.
- A **winter storm warning** indicates severe winter weather conditions are definitely on the way or may be occurring.
- A **blizzard warning** means larger amounts of falling or blowing snow and sustained winds of 35 miles per hour are expected for several hours.

Listen to your **NOAA Weather Radio**, local radio, television stations for weather reports and emergency information.

Many injuries occur each winter as people try to keep their homes warm and get around in cold, stormy conditions. December, January and February are the leading months for home fires and associated deaths in the United States. Each year, more than 700 people die of hypothermia (low body temperature) caused by extended exposure to cold temperatures, both indoors and out.

About half of these deaths are among persons age 65 and older.



Winter Weather ---Be Prepared!

- Before cold weather hits, make sure you have a way to heat your home safely during a power outage. Keep a multi-purpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby when using alternative heating sources.
- Keep extra blankets on hand with extra batteries, matches, a first aid kit, manual can opener and special needs items (e.g., diapers).
- Stock a few days' supply of water, required medications, and food that does not need to be refrigerated or cooked.
- Dress in several layers to maintain body heat. If possible, stay indoors. Winter storms can bring down power lines and trees, as we experienced last winter season in our area.

Winter Driving ---Preparing Your Car!

- Be sure to prepare your car for winter. Cold weather can be tough on batteries.
- Make sure your car is equipped with tires that are able to handle tough winter weather. For most motorists, all-season tires are adequate.
- Make sure windshield wipers and defrosters are in good working order and that washer reservoirs are filled with no freeze windshield washer fluid.
- In temperatures at or just above 32 degrees, a thin layer of water can cover the ice, causing extremely slippery conditions. Beware of "black ice"—ice that remains on the roadway that is not in direct sunlight. Use extra caution when driving on bridges; they freeze first because they are surrounded by cold air.
- Don't let frigid temperature tempt you into starting your car in a closed garage. Carbon monoxide from exhaust fumes is almost impossible to detect and can be fatal when breathed in a confined area.
- Pay attention. Don't try to out-drive the conditions. Leave plenty of room for stopping.
- Know the current road conditions in your area.
- Keep emergency gear in your car for everyday trips: cell phone, flashlight, jumper cables, ice scraper, blankets and warning devices (e.g., flares, reflectors).

(For additional Information - King County Take Winter By Storm at: <http://takewinterbystorm.org>)

