

A winter storm is bearing down. Are you ready?

Bitter temperatures, howling winds and icy precipitation can easily turn a pretty winter snowfall into a dangerous event.

With a storm now on your doorstep, here are a few things you can do to stay safe and warm while the storm passes through.

Check your supplies. Make sure you have a snow shovel and ice melt to keep walkways clear and safe. Check that you have sufficient heating fuel for your home and fuel for your generator, if you have one. If you will be using a fireplace or wood-burning stove, you should have a good supply of dry, seasoned wood. Have warm clothing and blankets on hand and stock non-perishable food items and necessary medications to last you and your family several days.

Get ready for a power outage. Turn your heat up now and close off any rooms that are not in use. Check pipe insulation and allow water to run at a trickle to prevent pipes from freezing. Charge your battery-powered electronic and communications devices. A battery-powered radio can help keep you aware of changing weather conditions. Get out your flashlights, batteries, first aid kit and other emergency supplies.

Stay warm – and safe. If you start a wood-burning fire, follow all fireplace safety precautions. Do not use an oven or a range as a home heating device. If you have a generator, use it outside only, where there is sufficient ventilation. Test all of your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure they work properly. Do not let candles burn unattended, and keep them away from combustibles. LED candles are a safe, energy efficient alternative. Also, if you have an ice dam prevention system, turn it on before the snow starts to fall.

Stay inside – and safe. Drive only if you absolutely must, and be sure your car is outfitted with snow tires, has adequate fuel and an emergency supply kit. If you go outside to shovel, know your limits and try not to overtax your body. Protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia by wearing layers of warm, loose-fitting, lightweight clothing. Stay away from any downed power lines you may see. Keep your pets inside, or make other suitable arrangements for them. We at Travelers hope these measures will help get you through the storm safely and comfortably.

Find more suggestions on long-term planning for a winter storm by visiting our page on winterizing your home.