

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR WINTER STORMS

Winter storms can be accompanied by strong winds, ice and snow accumulation, and extreme cold. These conditions can bring down trees, power and communication lines, and present extreme hazards to motorists and pedestrians. Winter storms can immobilize a region, disrupt normal activities and impair emergency services.

Winter storms are considered deceptive in that most deaths and injuries are indirectly related to the storm. Areas of concern relate to traffic accidents, heart attacks while shoveling snow, contact with downed power lines, hypothermia and frostbite. Hypothermia and frostbite can be prevented by limiting exposure to the elements, covering all exposed parts of the body and dressing in layers, including a hat and hood.

Shoveling snow is a physically demanding task. A person should take frequent breaks, keep hydrated by drinking water, and follow your doctor's orders regarding physical activity.

We urge every household to prepare for a weather emergency by preparing a household, auto and workplace emergency kit. The primary concerns for a winter storm are the potential loss of heat, power and water. Some of the suggested items are listed below.

Water. Store three gallons of water for each person in your household.

Food. Store a three-day supply of non-perishable food in your home; also keep some in your auto and at work. This should be food that requires no preparation.

First Aid Kit. Assemble a first aid kit for home, auto and work.

Other Items. Battery operated radio, flashlight, extra batteries, personal hygiene items.

Special Needs. Think about special needs related to infants, disabled, elderly and prescription medications.

If you need additional information, contact the fire department at 314-963-5344.

CARBON MONOXIDE ALERT

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, and tasteless gas that is produced most commonly by incomplete combustion of a fuel burning appliance or machine. CO is a deadly gas that is responsible for the majority of poisonings in the U.S.

In order to keep your homes and families safe it is important to install CO detectors and to be able to recognize the symptoms of CO poisoning. Carbon monoxide poisoning can cause symptoms very similar to the common cold and/or flu. The following symptoms could be attributed to CO poisoning.

- 1) Feeling tired for no reason.
- 2) Dizziness or vertigo.
- 3) Nausea and vomiting.
- 4) Headache.
- 5) Tingling and or numbness in arms and or fingers.

These symptoms should not be ignored, especially if several members of the household are experiencing the same symptoms.

The only way to detect carbon monoxide before experiencing symptoms is to place CO detectors in the home. CO detectors can be purchased at your local hardware or home improvement store. There are several types of detectors, but they all operate in a similar fashion. The key is to buy a detector that is U.L. certified and install according to directions.

We hope this information will prove to be helpful and beneficial to those who are at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. If you ever have a CO emergency do not hesitate to call the fire department. If you have questions, contact the Webster Groves Fire Department at 314-963-5344.