

# PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY FROM WINTER WEATHER

Stay healthy in winter weather with these simple steps!

## THE WINTER WEATHER AND HEALTH CONNECTION

In Wisconsin, winter conditions cause an average of 50,000 vehicle crashes and 45 deaths each year.

Freezing temperatures, wind chills, and dangerous weather can cause hypothermia, frostbite, and even death.

Take these important steps to protect your health and that of your family in winter weather.

## WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- **Make an emergency supply kit.** Important things to include in your kit: three-day supply of food and water, cell phone and charger, flashlight and batteries, first aid kit, extra cash, NOAA weather radio, and a change of clothes. Visit [readywisconsin.wi.gov/make-a-kit](http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/make-a-kit) for more items and tips.
- **Safely use alternative sources of heat.** Any heating system that burns fuel produces carbon monoxide. Never use electric generators, grills, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices indoors, as these may cause carbon monoxide poisoning. Use a battery-powered detector where you have fuel burning devices but no electric outlets, such as in tents, cabins, and RVs.
- **Have essentials in your car.** An emergency kit for your car is important in case your car stalls in winter weather. This could include: first aid kit, flashlight, windshield scraper, booster cables, shovel, bag of sand (for traction), and blankets. Visit [readywisconsin.wi.gov/make-a-kit](http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/make-a-kit) for more items and tips. Keep your gas tank at least half full.

## COLD WEATHER TIPS

Find a warming shelter.



Pro tip: Call 211 to find the warming center closest to you. Text SHELTER and your zip code to 43362 to find the nearest shelter.

Check on your neighbors.



Pro tip: The elderly, babies in cold bedrooms, people who spend lots of time outside (e.g., people who are experiencing homelessness, hunters), and people who drink alcohol or use drugs are more likely to be harmed by the cold.

Know the symptoms of hypothermia.



Pro tip: Symptoms include shivering, exhaustion, confusion, and slurred speech. If you have been exposed to extreme cold and have these symptoms, call 911 or see your doctor.

## MORE TIPS FOR EXTREME COLD:

- **Stay inside.** When possible, stay indoors.
- **Dress in layers.** If you have to venture out, dress in several loose-fitting layers. Wear a hat, mittens, and snow boots. Use a scarf to cover your mouth, face, and any other exposed skin.
- **Make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors.** All homes and duplexes in Wisconsin are required to have properly working detectors on every level, including the basement (but not attic or storage areas). Detectors can be purchased at most hardware stores for \$20–50.
- **Run generators at a safe distance (at least 20 feet) from the home.** Never run a generator inside a building, like a home or garage. Do not run a generator right next to windows and doors.
- **Limit outdoor time for pets.** Extreme cold is dangerous for animals too.



If you have to venture out into the cold, be sure to dress in layers.

For more tips, view the full toolkit at:

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/climate](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/climate)

**WISCONSIN CLIMATE AND HEALTH PROGRAM**  
Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health

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