



## Emergency Preparedness

### **Snow Storm/Blizzard**

Every area in Colorado has the potential for severe winter weather. Some winter storms are large enough to affect several states, while others affect only a single community. Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard that lasts for several days. Blizzards are severe winter storms that consist of blowing snow and wind resulting in very low visibility. In Colorado, blizzards may occur anytime from fall to winter, and even into the spring. Watch for updates on the [National Weather Service](#) website or Facebook and check the [Wheat Ridge website](#) for information about road closures and tips for staying safe during severe weather.

**Winter Weather Advisory** – Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. When caution is used, these situations should not be life threatening.

**Winter Storm Watch** – A winter storm is possible in your area. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for more information.

**Winter Storm Warning** – A winter storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area.

**Blizzard Warning** – Sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 miles per hour or greater and considerable amounts of falling or blowing snow (reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile) are expected to prevail for a period of three hours or longer.

**Frost/Freeze Warning** – Below freezing temperatures are expected.

### **Steps to prepare/respond:**

- Get ready for winter by having your snow removal equipment serviced; have non-toxic deicer on hand to melt ice on walkways and carry kitty litter in your car to use for temporary traction.
- Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas and make sure that their access to food and water is not blocked by snow drifts, ice or other obstacles.
- Winterize your vehicle and keep the gas tank full. A full tank will keep the fuel line from freezing. (Check antifreeze and change windshield wiper to the kind that won't freeze.)
- Insulate your home by installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic from the inside to keep cold air out.
- Have safe emergency heating equipment available such as a fireplace with an ample supply of wood, or small, well-vented, wood, coal or camp stove with fuel.
- Keep pipes from freezing by wrapping pipes in insulation or layers of old newspapers, covering the newspapers with plastic to keep out moisture, and letting faucets drip a little to avoid freezing – know how to shut off water valves.

- Have disaster supplies on hand, in case the power goes out. Include a flashlight and a portable, battery-operated radio, extra batteries, a first-aid kit, a one-week supply of non-perishable food and water (1 gallon per person per day), a manual can opener, one-week supply of prescription medications, extra blankets and sleeping bags.
- Develop an emergency communication plan in case family members are separated during a winter storm (e.g. during the day when adults are at work and children are at school) and have a plan for reuniting.
- Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact" because they won't be impacted by a local disaster. Make sure everyone knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person. Use the Facebook Disaster Safe Check in notification feature.
- If you will be going away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home — set to a temperature no lower than 55° F and open bathroom vanity doors and kitchen sink doors to help pipes stay warm.