



Winter Storm Safety Information

Shelters

Shelters are available if you have no power and nowhere else to go. Call MetroCall 311 for information.

Community Centers

Community Centers and Neighborhood Places will be open on Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday from 12 to 6 p.m. Food will be available. Call 311 for locations.

Heating and Fire Prevention

- **Generators** – Follow the manufacturer’s instructions carefully when using a gas-powered generator. NEVER use a generator inside your home, near an open window or in a garage. Make sure to store the generator outside, at least 10-12 feet from your home, so dangerous carbon monoxide won’t seep inside your living space.

When using a generator:

- **DO NOT** use generators indoors or inside attached garages, keep them at least 10 feet away from the home
 - Make sure engine is stopped when refueling
 - Use the recommended type of fuel for the generator in use
 - Allow generators to cool down for at least 15 minutes after prolonged use
 - **DO NOT** exceed the generator’s output capacity
- **Fireplaces** –Burn only wood in your fireplace and never leave fires unattended, especially in an area used by children or pets.

When using a fire place:

- Make sure it has been serviced by a certified technician
- Keep fires small
- Make sure flue is in working condition
- Use a screen to keep embers and sparks in the fire place

- **Space Heaters** – Portable space heaters should be placed at least three feet away from furniture, walls, curtains, or anything that burns, and always turn them off when you leave home or go to bed.

When using space heaters:

- Make sure it meets the industry's testing standards
 - Make sure it has built in safety features, i.e. it shuts off if not upright, or if it gets too hot, or has a timer
 - Keep them at least 3 feet away from any combustibles, i.e. upholstery, draperies, etc.
 - **DO NOT** hard wire the generator to directly to the home
 - **DO** use the approved type of extension cords
- **Liquid Fuel** – If your space heater runs on liquid fuel, such as kerosene, let the heater cool down before refueling it. Adding fuel to a hot heater can cause the fuel to ignite. Refuel your heaters outside, where spills won't present a fire hazard. Use only the fuel recommended by your heater's manufacture. Never put gasoline in any space heater.
- **Stoves and Grills** – DO NOT use a kitchen stove or outdoor grill (gas or charcoal) for heat. If you use a grill to cook, use it outside only; do not bring it inside. Dangerous carbon monoxide may build up inside your home if you use stoves or grills for heat.

Use a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector to stay safe while using generators or heaters while the power is out.

Warning-Carbon Monoxide can and will kill. It is colorless, odorless and invisible. It is a "Silent Killer".

Carbon monoxide exposure – If you or someone you know feels faint, sleepy, disoriented or nauseated, you may have been exposed to excessive carbon monoxide from an alternate heating source. Call 911 right away and get outside into fresh air as soon as possible.

Check your smoke alarm and practice your fire escape plan.

Downed trees and power lines:

- **DO NOT** handle any telephone, cable, or electrical lines; as they may be electrically charged
- **DO NOT** attempt to move or go near tree limbs on your home or near electrical lines; as they may be charged

Food Safety

Refrigerated foods should be safe as long as power is out for no more than four hours. If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, read the temperature when power comes back on. If the appliance thermometer stored in the freezer reads 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen.

Throw out any perishable food in your refrigerator, such as meat, poultry, lunchmeats, fish, dairy products, eggs and any prepared or cooked foods that have been above 41 degrees Fahrenheit for four hours. If the food still contains ice crystals or is 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below, it is safe to refreeze.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are safe as long as they are still firm and there is no evidence of mold or sliminess. Raw meats, poultry, cheese, juices, breads and pastries can be refrozen without losing too much food quality. Prepared food, fish, vegetables and fruits in the freezer can be refrozen safely, but food quality may suffer.

To remove spills and freshen the freezer and refrigerator, DPH recommends washing with a solution of two tablespoons of baking soda dissolved in one quart of warm water. To absorb any lingering odors, place an open box or dish of baking soda in the appliance.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when an individual's body temperature drops below what is necessary to achieve normal metabolism and other bodily functions. In severe cases or when the body is not warmed properly, death can result. People exposed to cold weather and those who aren't sufficiently prepared also are at an increased risk for the condition. To prevent hypothermia:

Wear appropriate clothing. Layer clothes made of synthetic and wool fabrics, which are best for keeping warm. Always remember to wear hats, coats, scarves and gloves.

Avoid consuming alcohol if outdoors. Alcohol can actually speed the loss of heat from the body. Avoid overexertion from activities that cause excessive sweat. This can lead to damp clothing, which causes chills.

Stay as dry as possible.

Outdoor workers should make sure they are dressed appropriately and take frequent breaks to warm up and make sure their clothes are sufficient to keep them warm and dry.

Symptoms of hypothermia include shivering, altered speech pattern, abnormally slow rate of breathing, cold pale skin and lethargy. Seek medical attention if you or a loved one experiences the signs of hypothermia. Individuals experiencing these symptoms should call 911 or seek medical attention immediately.