



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR WINTER WEATHER?

*Forsyth County encourages residents to prepare during
Winter Weather Preparedness Week, November 30 – December 4*

Forsyth County, Georgia – While many consider the snow and ice that accompany the winter season to be scenic, people can forget that winter weather has the potential to devastate communities and affect thousands of people. Snow and ice can disrupt transportation and cause power outages, making it important for Forsyth County residents to be prepared. The Forsyth County Emergency Management Agency and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security’s Ready Georgia campaign is urging Forsyth County residents to take time to get ready for potentially disastrous weather emergencies this winter.

“Winter Weather Preparedness Week is a great time for Forsyth County residents and businesses to prepare for all potential severe winter weather hazards,” said Forsyth County Fire Chief and EMA Director Danny Bowman. “Since winter weather in Georgia can be unpredictable, proactive plans and education for potentially dangerous storms can help ensure the safety of our residents during winter weather.”

Winter storms are “deceptive killers” because most deaths are indirectly related to storms, according to the National Weather Service. Instead, people die because of events like traffic accidents on icy roads and hypothermia from prolonged exposure to cold. Winter Weather Preparedness Week, from Nov. 30 – Dec. 4, was created to raise awareness of winter weather hazards and reinforce understanding of associated terminology. Residents are encouraged to prepare for severe weather and replenish necessary supplies among other necessary steps. Below are some helpful tips for severe winter weather preparedness:

Be Informed

- Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio and monitor commercial radio, television and the Internet to stay informed.
- Learn about the terms used to describe winter hazards such as freezing rain, sleet, winter weather advisory, winter storm watch and winter storm warning.
 - A **winter storm watch** is issued when significant winter weather (i.e. 2 inches or more of snow, ½ inch or more of sleet, ¼ inch or more of freezing rain, or a combination of these events) is possible, but not imminent. A wide range of weather events can prompt a winter storm watch so make sure to pay attention to what the watch is calling

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for specifically. A watch is typically issued 12 to 48 hours before the possibility of winter weather. This is the time to prepare.

- A **winter weather advisory** indicates that winter weather is imminent and may cause inconveniences; monitor media for your local impacts. A winter weather advisory is issued up to 36 hours before an event where an 80 percent or greater chance of winter precipitation (i.e. snow, freezing rain/drizzle, sleet or blowing snow) is expected to cause inconveniences, but does not meet warning criteria. This is the time to put your winter weather safety plan into action.
- A **winter storm warning** is issued when a significant winter storm (i.e., 2 inches or more of snow, ½ inch or more of sleet, ¼ inch or more of freezing rain, or a combination of these events) is imminent and is a dangerous threat to life and property. A winter storm warning can also be issued at forecaster and emergency manager discretion when significant impacts are expected but snow, sleet or freezing rain criteria is not met. These warnings are typically issued up to 36 hours before an event that has an 80 percent or greater chance of significant winter precipitation. This is the time to put your winter weather safety plan into action.
- Know the symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia.
 - **Frostbite** occurs when your body tissue freezes. Your extremities may have a white or pale appearance and may lose feeling. The most susceptible areas of your body are the fingers, toes, earlobes or the tip of your nose.
 - **Hypothermia** occurs when your body temperature falls below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Warning signs include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and exhaustion.

If you suspect you have frostbite or hypothermia, get medical attention immediately.

Make a Plan

- Create an emergency communications plan so family members will know who to contact if separated during a storm. Designate at least one out-of-town contact.
- Plan for pets to come inside and store adequate food and water for them.
- Plan to stay inside, if necessary, for at least three days. If trapped outside during severe winter, try to stay dry, cover all body parts, move limbs to keep blood circulating and, if possible, build a fire.

Build a Kit and Be Prepared

- Build a Ready Kit of emergency supplies for both your home and your car.
 - Home Ready Kit: Include a three-day supply of nonperishable food, water, a flash light with extra batteries, a NOAA Weather Radio, adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm, as well as additional supplies for the unique needs of your family, such as medication.

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- Mobile Ready Kit: In addition to the essentials in your Home Ready Kit, consider adding a portable cell phone charger, ice scraper, extra blanket, sand for traction and jumper cables.
- If you have a wood-burning fireplace, consider storing wood to keep you warm if winter weather knocks out your heat. Also, make sure you have your chimney cleaned and inspected every year.
- Ensure proper home insulation by placing weather stripping around doors and windows, allowing faucets to drip during cold weather to prevent freezing and opening cabinet doors to let heat reach uninsulated pipes under sinks and appliances near exterior walls.
- Winterize your vehicle and keep your gas tank at least half full to prevent your fuel line from freezing.
- Avoid traveling in icy conditions. If you must go out and do get stuck, stay with your car. Pack an extra Ready Kit in the trunk of your car with necessary supplies.

Georgians looking for more information on how to prepare, plan and stay informed about winter weather can contact the Forsyth County Emergency management Agency at (770) 205-5674 or visit ready.ga.gov. For preparedness on the go, download the Ready Georgia mobile app.

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About Ready Georgia

Ready Georgia is a statewide campaign designed to educate and empower Georgians to prepare for and respond to natural disasters, pandemic outbreaks, potential terrorist attacks and other large-scale emergencies. The campaign is a project of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security (GEMA/HS) and provides a local dimension to Ready America, a broader national campaign. Ready Georgia aims to prepare citizens for maintaining self-sufficiency for at least 72 hours following an emergency, and uses an interactive website, free mobile app, broadcast and print advertising and public awareness media messaging to reach its audiences. Ready Georgia is also on Facebook and YouTube.

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