



Governor Ted Strickland

American Red Cross
Emergency Management Association of Ohio
National Weather Service
Ohio Citizen Corps
Ohio Department of Aging
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal
Ohio News Network

Ohio Department of Education
Ohio Department of Health
Ohio Department of Insurance
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Department of Public Safety – Ohio EMA
Ohio Insurance Institute

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Frost Advisories and Snow Showers? Winter's on the Way!

Columbus, OH – Nighttime temperatures started dipping down to the 20s and 30s throughout Ohio late last month. The Buckeye State is already experiencing biting winds, frost advisories and snow showers. Winter is definitely on its way. In a coordinated effort with the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA), Gov. Ted Strickland has proclaimed the week of Nov. 16 through 22 as Ohio's Winter Safety Awareness Week to help encourage households, schools, businesses and organizations to get ready now for severe winter weather.

“Ohio has had its share of severe weather-related incidents. We recently received federal disaster assistance for severe windstorm damages and prolonged power outages from the remnants of Hurricane Ike,” said Ohio Department of Public Safety Director Henry Guzmán. “Citizens need to have emergency preparedness kits for their homes and vehicles, and practice their emergency plans and fire drills, so they'll know what to do in the event of a severe winter storm or home fire.”

OCSWA recommends the following in preparing for the cold, winter months:

Modify your disaster preparedness plans. Every home, school, business and organization should have written plans for the different types of disasters that can impact your establishment. Review the plans with the entire family or staff. Everyone should know what to do in the event of a snow or ice storm, a prolonged power outage, a flood or fire. Prepare and practice drills that require sheltering in place and evacuating the building. Every home plan should include two escape routes from every room. Update your emergency contact list and establish a meeting place away from the home, school or business, so others will know where to find or meet you.

Invest in a NOAA Weather Radio. Every home, school and business should have a tone-alert weather radio with a battery back-up. Weather and public alert radios are programmed to automatically sound an alert during severe weather watches and warnings. Attachments such as vibrating pager devices and bed shakers are available at most electronics stores for people with hearing impairment.

Prepare winter disaster kits for the home and vehicle. Refresh your nonperishable foods and bottled water stored in your disaster kits. Change the batteries in your smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and radios. Winter emergency kits should include warm clothing, blankets, flashlights, new batteries, coats, hats, gloves, a battery-operated or hand-cranked radio, first aid kit, and enough nonperishable food and water (one gallon per person, per day) to sustain each family member for at least three days. Have stored food and bottled water and supplies for your pets as well. Ensure that vehicles have annual tune ups and maintenance checks and try to maintain a least a half tank of fuel in vehicles to reduce the chance of fuel-line freeze up.

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Prepare and protect your home for winter. Cut and remove low-hanging and dead tree branches. Ice, snow and strong winds can cause tree limbs to break and fall. Have your gutters cleaned. Snow and ice can build up quickly if gutters are clogged with debris. Have auxiliary heaters, furnaces and fireplaces maintenance checked or serviced before use. If using an electric heating element, never leave it unattended or fall asleep while it is plugged in and operating. Check your homeowner's insurance policy. Flood insurance is needed to cover any flood-related damage.

OCSWA is an advocate for family emergency preparedness and is comprised of representatives from the American Red Cross; Emergency Management Association of Ohio; National Weather Service; Ohio Citizen Corps; Ohio Emergency Management Agency, a division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety; Ohio Insurance Institute; Ohio News Network; Ohio Department of Commerce – State Fire Marshal; and the Ohio Departments of Aging, Education, Health, Insurance and Natural Resources.

For additional information on severe weather preparedness, visit the committee's Web site at www.weathersafety.ohio.gov.

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