



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 Department of Education

Ohio Department of Health  
Ohio Department of Insurance  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Ohio Department of Public Safety -Ohio EMA  
Ohio Department of Transportation  
Ohio Insurance Institute

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WINTER IS COMING. ARE YOU PREPARED?**  
*Winter Safety Awareness Week is November 11-17, 2012*

**Columbus, OH** – When the remnants of Superstorm Sandy hit Ohio October 29, it hit with a vengeance. It brought torrential winds, flooding, snow and ice. It downed trees and power lines, leaving more than 250,000 Ohioans without power for day. Superstorm Sandy showed Ohio, the East Coast, and other states just how unpredictable weather can be. Superstorm Sandy, with all of its devastating destruction, re-emphasizes the importance of severe weather safety and preparedness.

Sunday, November 11 kicks off Ohio’s Winter Safety Awareness Week. In Governor John R. Kasich’s resolution it states, “Winter Safety Awareness Week creates the opportunity for Ohioans to prepare their homes, schools, businesses and organizations for the upcoming months of potential severe winter weather and conditions associated with it, such as snow and ice storms, flooding from rapid thaws, (and) extended power outages caused by winter storms.”

As part of a coordinated effort with the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA), Gov. Kasich encourages Ohioans to update their safety plans, replenish their disaster supply kits to sustain all household members for several days, and prepare themselves and their property for winter-related incidents.

“Superstorm Sandy reinforced to us all the importance of severe weather and emergency preparedness,” said Nancy Dragani, executive director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. “If you’re using a generator as an alternative power source, make sure you read the safety directions to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and ensure they’re working properly. Conduct fire drills to ensure that everyone knows two ways out of any room.”

To help prepare for the upcoming winter months, OCSWA recommends the following:

**Prepare 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 using. If using a portable generator, read instructions thoroughly to guard against carbon monoxide poisoning. Review your homeowner’s insurance policy; consider your need for flood insurance.

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***Prepare winter disaster kits for the home and vehicle.*** Refresh stored nonperishable foods and bottled water. 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 every family member for several days. Have stored food, bottled water and supplies for your pets, as well.

***Invest in a NOAA Public Alert/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 public safety and severe weather events. Click on [www.weather.gov/nwr/](http://www.weather.gov/nwr/) for additional information.

***Update your disaster preparedness plans.*** Every home, school, business and organization should have written plans for the different types of disasters that can occur. 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. Post contact information for your local emergency management agency. Prepare and practice drills that require sheltering in place and evacuation. Update your emergency contact list and establish a meeting place outside of the home, school or business, where others will know where to find or meet you.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is an advocate for emergency preparedness and is comprised of representatives from the American Red Cross; Emergency Management Association of Ohio; National Weather Service; Hands On, Central Ohio; Ohio Department of Public Safety-Emergency Management Agency; Ohio Insurance Institute; Ohio Department of Commerce – State Fire Marshal; and the Ohio Departments of Aging, Education, Health, Insurance, Natural Resources, and Transportation.

For additional information on winter weather safety and severe weather preparedness, visit OCSWA's site at [www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov).

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