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National Weather Service  
Ohio Department of Aging  
Ohio Department of Education  
Ohio Department of Health  
Ohio Department of Insurance

Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Ohio Emergency Management Agency  
Emergency Management Association of Ohio  
Ohio Insurance Institute  
Ohio News Network  
Division of the State Fire Marshal

**Bob Taft, Governor of Ohio**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**October's Cold Weather Serves as Early Reminder for Winter Preparedness**

*Winter Safety Awareness Week is November 12-18, 2006*

Columbus, OH – Last month made Ohio weather history books as one of the wettest and stormiest Octobers. Ohio experienced flooding, tornadoes, hailstorms and even snow. October served as a reminder that it's never too early to prepare for severe weather safety – especially in Ohio. This year, Governor Bob Taft has proclaimed the week of November 12-18 as Winter Safety Awareness Week in Ohio.

“Ohio citizens face the yearly threat of potentially devastating tornadoes, floods and other severe weather events,” Taft said. “I urge our community leaders and the news media to assist the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness in educating Ohioans about the dangers of severe weather and the safety measures that can be taken in preparation for tornadoes and floods.”

With temperatures dipping down to the 30s last month, Ohioans have had to pull out the extra blankets and turn up the heat in their homes. The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA) recommends Ohio families to take the following steps to prepare for the cold, winter months:

***Invest in a NOAA Weather Radio or Public Alert Radio for your home, school or business.*** The U.S. departments of Education, Commerce (National Weather Service) and Homeland Security have partnered to insure every public school in the nation has a NOAA Public Alert or Weather Radio. Public alert radios are designed to signal various alerts ranging from weather emergencies, child abductions, acts of terrorism or other emergencies.

***Make a disaster preparedness plan.*** Every home, school and business should have a written plan for any possible emergency and know what to do, where to meet and where to go in the event of power outages, ice storms, flooding, fires or tornadoes. Everyone should know the difference between storm watches and warnings. Prepare and practice drills that require sheltering in place and evacuation.

***Prepare disaster kits for the home and vehicle.*** Winter emergency kits should include warm clothing, blankets, flashlights, batteries, coats, hats, gloves, a battery-operated radio, first aid kit and enough non-perishable food and water to sustain each family member for at least three days. Vehicles should have at least a half-tank of fuel. Every home should have properly working smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is an advocate for family emergency preparedness and is comprised of representatives from the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, American Red Cross, National Weather Service, Ohio Insurance Institute, Ohio News Network, Emergency Management Association of Ohio, State Fire Marshal, and the Ohio departments of Aging, Education, Health, Insurance and Natural Resources. The OCSWA Web site: [www.ocswa.ohio.gov](http://www.ocswa.ohio.gov) has extensive information on severe weather safety, flood insurance, first aid and home fire safety tips.

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