



## Greene County Public Health

Melissa Howell MS, MBA, MPH, RN, REHS, Health Commissioner  
Kevin L. Sharrett, MD, Medical Director

# Press Release

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## Public Health Provides Preparedness Tips Ahead of Winter Storm

**GREENE COUNTY, OH** – Greene County Public Health officials are gearing up for the pending winter storm that will potentially hit our area this weekend and into the coming week. Winter storms increase the risk of car accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning, and heart attacks from overexertion.

### HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A WINTER STORM THREATENS

Prepare Now:

- Know your area's risk for winter storms. Extreme winter weather can leave communities without utilities or other services for long periods.
- Prepare your home to keep out the cold with insulation, caulking, and weather stripping. Learn how to keep pipes from freezing. Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups.
- Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of freezing weather and winter storms. Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- Gather supplies if you need to stay home for several days without power. Consider each person's specific needs, including medication. Do not forget the needs of pets. Have extra batteries for radios and flashlights.
- Create an emergency supply kit for your car. Include jumper cables, sand, a flashlight, warm clothes, blankets, bottled water, and non-perishable snacks. Keep the gas tank full.
- Learn to identify the signs of frostbite and hypothermia and learn basic treatments for them. For more information, visit [Winter Weather: Before, During, and After | Winter Weather | CDC](#)

During the Storm:

- Stay off the roads if at all possible. If trapped in your car, stay inside.
- Limit your time outside. If you need to go outside, wear layers of warm clothing. Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows. Never heat your home with a gas stovetop or oven.
- Reduce the risk of a heart attack. Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow.
- Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia and begin treatment right away.
- Check on neighbors. Older adults and young children are more at risk of extreme cold.

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**Greene County**



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### Recognize and Respond:

- **Frostbite** causes loss of feeling and color around the face, fingers, and toes.
  - **Signs:** Numbness, white or grayish-yellow skin, firm or waxy skin.
  - **Actions:** Go to a warm room. Soak in warm water. Use body heat to warm. Do not massage or use a heating pad.
- **Hypothermia** is an unusually low body temperature. A temperature below 95 degrees is an emergency.
  - **Signs:** Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, or drowsiness.
  - **Actions:** Go to a warm room. Warm the center of the body first—chest, neck, head, and groin. Keep dry and wrapped in warm blankets, including the head and neck.

### KNOW YOUR WEATHER TERMS: WARNING, WATCH, ADVISORY

- **Winter Storm Warning** - Issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet is imminent or occurring. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin.
- **Winter Storm Watch** - Alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Winter Storm Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before the beginning of a Winter Storm.
- **Winter Weather Advisory** - Issued for accumulations of snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and sleet, which will cause significant inconveniences and could lead to life-threatening situations if caution is not exercised.

### TRAVELING THE ROADWAYS

- Make sure your vehicle is in good working condition before you travel.
- Keep your gas tank as full as you can. A full tank will also keep the fuel line from freezing.
- Install good winter tires and ensure they have enough tread, as well as any chains or studs required in your local area.
- When driving, [increase your following distance](#) from 3-4 seconds to 5-6 seconds. It takes longer to slow down and stop on icy roads.
- Every vehicle should have an [emergency supply kit](#) in the trunk. Kits should be checked every six months, and expired items should be replaced regularly.
- Keep family and emergency phone numbers in your phone, including your auto insurance provider and a towing company.
- Consider keeping a power bank for your phone in your car if your vehicle loses power.
- [If stranded](#), run the engine for about 10 minutes per hour to run the heater and charge your cell phone. Open a window slightly to let fresh air in and avoid [poisoning from carbon monoxide \(CO\)](#).
- Don't "crowd the plow"—give them plenty of room to clear the roads and lay down salt, brine mixture, or other snow-melting material.

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### POWER OUTAGES & GENERATOR USE

If the power goes out:

- Keep freezers and refrigerators closed.
  - The refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours.
  - A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours.
  - Use coolers with ice if necessary.
  - Monitor temperatures with a thermometer. Throw out food if the temperature is 40 degrees or higher.
- Use a generator, but **ONLY** outdoors and away from windows.
- Do not use a gas stove or oven to heat your home.
- Disconnect appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges.
- Have alternate plans for refrigerating medicines or using power-dependent medical devices.
- Check with local officials about heating and cooling locations open near you.

Generators can be helpful when the power goes out. However, using them safely is essential to prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning and other hazards.

- Generators and fuel should always be used outdoors and *at least* 20 feet from windows, doors, and attached garages.
- **Install working carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home.** Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can kill you, your family, and your pets.
- Keep the generator dry and protected from rain or flooding. Touching a wet generator or devices connected to one can cause electrical shock.
- Always connect the generator to appliances with heavy-duty extension cords.
- Let the generator cool before refueling. Fuel spilled on hot engine parts can ignite.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions *carefully*.

Get more information and actively participate in your safety! Go to [www.ready.gov/winter-weather](http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather).  
Download the FEMA app for more information about preparing for a winter storm.

**Greene County Public Health...**  
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