

## Ohio Issues Weather Safety Tips for Cold/Winter Storms

**Columbus, Ohio---** With winter rapidly approaching, every household should be prepared to face another period of dangerous winter storms and flooding. The Department of Public Safety Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) urges all residents to be prepared.

To stay safe, learn the difference between winter storm watches and warnings mean; prepare your home against the cold; and use caution and common sense when driving.

### **Winter Awareness Information:**

- A winter storm WATCH means a winter storm is possible in your area.
- A winter storm WARNING means a winter storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area. Local National Weather Service forecast offices issue warnings on a county-by-county basis.
- A blizzard WARNING means sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 miles per hour or greater and considerable falling or blowing snow (reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile) are expected to prevail for a period of three hours or longer.
- Be aware of changing weather conditions.

### **Winter Preparedness Information:**

- Use a NOAA Weather Radio to keep you informed of watches and warnings issued in your area.
- Keep your vehicle's gas tank full for emergency use and to keep the fuel line from freezing
- Discuss with your family what to do if a winter storm WATCH or WARNING is issued.
- Make sure your home is properly insulated. If necessary, insulate walls and attic.
- To keep pipes from freezing:
  - Wrap pipes in insulation or layers of old newspapers.
  - Cover the newspapers with plastic to keep moisture out
  - Let faucets drip a little to avoid freezing
  - Know how to shut off water valves

### **Winter Driving:**

- Have your vehicles winterized before the winter storm season
- Put together a separate disaster supplies kit for your vehicle
- Be aware of sleet and freezing rain
- Speed and Distance —The faster you're going, the longer it will take to stop. When accelerating on snow or ice, take it slow to avoid slipping and sliding. Remember, Ice and Snow...Take it Slow.
- Brake — Brake early, brake slowly, brake correctly, and never slam on the brakes. If you have anti-lock brakes, press the pedal down firmly and hold it. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, gently pump the pedal. Either way, give yourself plenty of room to stop.
- Control — When driving on ice and snow, do not use cruise control and avoid abrupt steering maneuvers. When merging into traffic, take it slow. Sudden movements can cause your vehicle to slide.
- Vision — Be aware of what's going on well ahead of you. Actions by other vehicles will alert you to problems more quickly, and give you that split-second of extra time to react safely.
- Logo on to [www.buckeyetraffic.org](http://www.buckeyetraffic.org) for accurate information on road closures and detours.