

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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Don't Let Indian Summer Fool You – Winter is Coming
Winter Safety Awareness Week is November 15-21

Columbus, OH – Even though Ohio has experienced unseasonably warm temperatures over the last few days, the calendar still reads ‘November.’ Winter is still coming. Take advantage of the weather to modify your emergency preparedness kits, update your emergency plans and winterize your vehicles.

In a coordinated effort with the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA), Governor Ted Strickland has proclaimed the week of November 15-21 as Ohio’s Winter Safety Awareness Week to help encourage households, schools, businesses and organizations to prepare now for severe winter weather.

“Ohio has a history of crippling snow storms and winter weather that has caused long-term power outages and other severe damage,” said Ohio Department of Public Safety Director Cathy Collins-Taylor. “It is never too early to prepare for winter weather emergencies. Update your disaster supply kit to ensure it has blankets and fresh supplies for winter weather. Everyone, regardless of age, should be prepared for a disaster whether it’s winter, spring, summer or fall.”

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

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.

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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“Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness”

www.weathersafety.ohio.gov

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. Attachments such as vibrating pager devices and bed shakers are available at electronics stores for people with hearing impairment. Click on <http://www.weather.gov/nwr/> for additional information.

Mitigate 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. Ensure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working properly. Review your homeowner's insurance policy; invest in flood insurance.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is an advocate for family emergency preparedness and is comprised of representatives from American Red Cross; Emergency Management Association of Ohio; National Weather Service; Ohio Citizen Corps/FirstLink; 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 winter weather safety and severe weather preparedness, visit OCSWA's site at www.weathersafety.ohio.gov.

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