

## **Winter Storm Impacts & Suggested Actions**

Pursuant to Texas Government Code 418.048(b), the following list are suggested actions for state agencies and the public to take to prepare for winter storms, organized by severity of storm based on the [National Weather Service Winter Storm Severity Index](#).

**Limited Impacts**: Rarely a direct threat to life and property. Typically results in little inconveniences.

- Build an Emergency Kit.
- Seal windows and doors.
- Protect your pipes.
- Layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing will keep you warmer than one bulky sweater.
- When it's freezing limit time outside.
- Bring your furry friends inside when temperatures take a dip!
- Wipe dog's paws after each trip outside. Ice-melting chemicals or rock salt can cause irritation, sickness or be fatal.
- Winter fires can be deadly. When using your fireplace always keep a metal or heat tempered screen around it to stay safe.
- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from a fireplace, wood stove, or space heater.

**Minor Impacts**: Rarely a direct threat to life and property. Typically results in an inconvenience to daily life.

Follow all of the Limited Impact suggested actions above, plus the following:

- Cold can kill. Dress in layers, cover skin and limit time outside.
- Listen to local officials.
- Follow local weather alerts.
- Follow local jurisdiction emergency alerts.
- Use safe heating devices.
- Freezing temperatures increase frostbite risk. Learn the warning signs of frostbite: [www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter](http://www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter)
- Space heaters cause 1/3 of home heating fires and 4/5 home heating fires deaths. Protect your family with tips from USFA <http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/top-causes-of-fire/heating>
- Shivering, memory loss, and slurred speech signs of hypothermia. Learn the other signs here: [www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/index.html)
- Have emergency supplies in place at home, at work, and in the car.
- Know the difference in Winter Storm Watches and Warnings.

**Moderate Impacts:** Often threatening to life and property. Some damage unavoidable. Typically results in disruptions to daily life.

Follow all of the Limited & Minor Impact suggested actions above, plus the following:

- Talk to your job before it snows about weather policies and procedures.
- Have a carbon monoxide alarm in place, especially if using alternative heating devices.
- Talk with your family and make a plan to connect before a Winter Storm by text, e-mail, social media & cell.
- Prepare for winter storms and cold weather with the kids by playing the disaster master game: [www.ready.gov/kids/games](http://www.ready.gov/kids/games). Password hint: SLEET
- Check on neighbors.
- Fill prescriptions in advance.
- Charge cell phones.
- Stay off icy roads when Winter Storm advisories & watches are issued.
- Ice and snow, take it slow—slower speed, slower acceleration, slower steering, and slower braking.

**Major Impacts:** Extensive property damage likely. Life saving actions needed. Will likely result in major disruptions to daily life.

Follow all of the Limited, Minor, and Moderate Impact suggested actions above, plus the following:

- Stay off the road during and after a winter storm.
- Find flashlights (check batteries)
- When the storm hits, stay put and off the roads.
- Keep water, non-perishable food, and an extra set of warm clothes in the car in case you get stranded during winter weather.
- Shoveling snow can be a health risk, so remember to take it easy.
- Many people die each year from heart attacks brought on by shoveling snow. Pace yourself & get your neighbors involved.
- If you must drive "Don't Crowd the Plow!"
- Clear snow & ice off of fire hydrants so fire departments can gain access.
- If you're running a portable generator, you need to have a working Carbon Monoxide alarm in your home.
- NEVER use a generator, camp stove, charcoal grill, gasoline or propane heater indoors.
- NEVER heat a home by using the stovetop or oven.
- Keep generators outside at least 20 feet away from doors, windows, and vents to avoid accidental CO poisoning.

**Extreme Impacts** – Extensive and widespread severe property damage, life saving actions will be needed. Results in extreme disruptions to daily life.

- Follow **ALL** suggested actions above.