



Employee Assistance Network (EAN)

Winter Storm Preparedness Guide

1. Workplace & Organizational Preparedness

- Establish remote work or closure protocols.
- Communicate clear expectations and emergency contacts.
- Encourage employees to prioritize safety.
- Provide mental health and emotional support resources, as winter storms can increase stress and isolation. **EAN is your EAP provider you can connect to for support. EAN can be reached at 828-252-5725, EMAIL: ean@eannc.com and/or our website www.eannc.com**

2. Before a Winter Storm

Stay Informed

- Monitor local weather forecasts and alerts.
- Sign up for emergency notifications from local authorities.
- Know the difference between a winter storm watch (possible) and a warning (imminent or occurring).

Emergency Supplies (3–5 days recommended)

- Water (1 gallon per person per day)
- Non-perishable food and manual can opener
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- Medications and first-aid supplies
- Warm blankets, hats, gloves, coats
- Power banks for phones/devices
- Cash (ATMs may be unavailable)

Home Preparation

- Insulate exposed pipes; know how to shut off water.
- Service heating systems and chimneys.
- Stock ice melt/sand and a snow shovel.
- Set thermostats consistently to avoid frozen pipes.
- Bring pets indoors and prepare pet supplies.

Vehicle Readiness

- Keep the gas tank at least half full.
- Winter emergency kit: blanket, flashlight, jumper cables, food, water, ice scraper, phone charger.
- Check tires, brakes, antifreeze, and windshield fluid.



3. During a Winter Storm

Stay Safe Indoors

- Avoid unnecessary travel.
- Keep doors closed to retain heat.
- Use generators and grills outdoors only—never indoors (carbon monoxide risk).
- If power is lost, wear layers and gather in one room.

If You Must Travel

- Tell someone your route and expected arrival time.
- Drive slowly; avoid sudden braking.
- Stay in your vehicle if stranded and call for help.

Prevent Cold-Related Injuries

- Limit time outside.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia and frostbite.
- Check on elderly neighbors or those with medical needs.

4. After the Storm

Use Caution

- Watch for ice, downed power lines, and falling branches.
- Clear snow safely to avoid overexertion or heart strain.
- Ventilate well when using fireplaces or heaters.

Recovery

- Check pipes for freezing or leaks.
- Restock supplies as soon as possible.
- Document any storm-related damage for insurance.

What to Do During a Power Outage

Before a Power Outage (Preparation)

- Keep flashlights, extra batteries, and a battery-powered or hand-crank radio accessible
- Charge phones, laptops, and backup battery packs
- Know how to manually open garage doors or security systems
- Keep important contact numbers written down
- If you rely on medical devices, identify backup power options and emergency contacts
- Store non-perishable food and bottled water

During a Power Outage

- Stay calm and check on others, especially children, older adults, or vulnerable individuals
- Use flashlights instead of candles to reduce fire risk
- Unplug sensitive electronics to prevent damage from power surges
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to preserve food
- Avoid using generators indoors or near windows (carbon monoxide risk)
- If traffic lights are out, treat intersections as four-way stops
- Follow local emergency updates via radio or phone alerts

If You're at Work

Follow your organization's emergency or continuity plan
Use backup lighting only as directed
Communicate clearly with staff or clients about next steps
Suspend non-essential services if safety cannot be ensured

After Power Is Restored

Turn appliances and electronics back on gradually
Check food safety (discard refrigerated food if power was out >4 hours)
Restock emergency supplies if used
Report outages or hazards to your utility provider

Emotional & Mental Well-Being

Power outages can increase stress and anxiety, especially for those already under strain.

Use grounding techniques (deep breathing, reassurance)

Maintain routines where possible

Encourage connection and communication

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