# Preparing for Winter Weather

Texas weather is ever-changing—sometimes with little warning. Winter weather can be particularly volatile and isn’t over yet. Though we’ve already had cold snaps, we can still get more winter weather. There’s still time to get ready. The first step is getting informed that snow, ice, and cold are potentially dangerous and create their own challenges.

Simple tips and supplies can keep everyone safe at home or on the road.

Around home:

* Stay indoors and have a stocked emergency supply kit for *all* your needs.
* Move carefully on snowy, icy walkways.
* Dress in layers, covering exposed skin, and keep dry. Wet clothing loses heat rapidly.
* Use caution when clearing sidewalks or driveways – take breaks, push snow instead of lifting it, and lift lighter loads to avoid over-exertion.
* I​f pipes freeze, remove any insulation and wrap pipes in cloth like rags. Open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they were most likely exposed to the cold.
* Use space heaters safely. Don’t leave them unattended and use ventilation when using/refueling alternative fuel heaters. Check cords for fraying.
* Don’t forget your pets. Bring them inside and a have emergency supplies for them as well.
* If you will be away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55ºF.​​

In a car/traveling:

* Stay off the roads when possible. Listen to the radio to keep up-to-date on current traffic and road closures.
* If you must travel, slower speeds are safer and give more time to respond to what’s around you.
* Keep more distance between you and the nearest vehicle. Three times (3X) the normal distance provides a good margin of safety.
* Keep at least a half-tank of gas in your car and your cell phone charged.
* If you slide or skid – turn your car in the direction of the skid and ease off the gas. Don’t hit the brakes and gently regain control and traction.
* Have an emergency kit in your car with a first aid kit, jumper cables, blankets, flashlights (with batteries), tool kit, gloves, extra clothes, ice scraper, food and water, and sand or cat litter.
* If you are stranded, stay in your car with the hazard lights flashing and wrap up in layers to stay warm. Call for assistance.

Check out our Get Informed and Get Prepared tabs for more information on local hazards and how to prepare your home and car for safety no matter what the emergency.