

**Columbia/Boone County
Office of Emergency Management
Public Safety Joint Communications
17 N. 7th Street, Suite A
Columbia, MO 65201**

News Release

Contact: Zim Schwartz, OEM Director

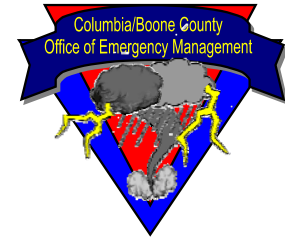
**For Immediate Release:
November 14, 2011**

BE PREPARED FOR WINTER WEATHER *Winter Weather Awareness Day, November 16th, 2011*

With the memories of the February 2011 blizzard still fresh in our collective memories, the Columbia/Boone County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) reminds residents that the next winter season is just around the corner. Now is the time to make sure you're prepared for all that winter brings with it.

"While we hope we don't have another snow event such as this past February, that doesn't mean we should not be prepared," says OEM Director Zim Schwartz. "Preparation in advance of February's blizzard by residents, businesses, schools and governmental entities prevented the situation from being much worse than it could have been. We can't stop the snow and ice from falling and accumulating but we can control our response to it. That means getting ready now, and knowing what to do before, during, and after a winter weather event."

Schwartz advises everyone to be prepared for winter weather by having an emergency kit in both homes and vehicles. A home kit should include enough basic

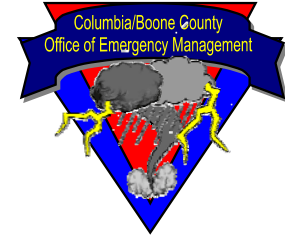


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supplies for all occupants to last up to 72 hours. In vehicles, kits should contain items that will help in the event a motorist becomes stranded for any length of time.

During severe winter storms and snow, it is quite common to see cars that have slid off of the roadway. Residents are reminded that if there is yellow tape visible on the highest point on the car, such as the antenna or mirror, the car has been checked by law enforcement, MoDOT, or another agency. In that event, there is no need to report that car.

November 16th is “Winter Weather Awareness Day”, a cooperative effort of the Columbia/Boone County Office of Emergency Management, the National Weather Service (NWS), State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), the Department of Health and Senior Services, Missouri Highway Patrol and the State Fire Marshal’s office. The Columbia/Boone County Office of Emergency Management can assist residents wanting to learn more about winter weather preparation. For brochures and information, call (573) 874-7400, or go online at www.gocolumbiamo.com/EM.



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Winter Weather Safety Tips

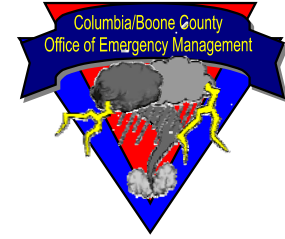
(Information provided by the National Weather Service)

In Your Home:

- ***Stay updated.*** Keep ahead of advancing winter weather by listening to NOAA Weather Radio.
- ***Check batteries.*** Check battery powered equipment before the storm arrives, in case electric service is interrupted.
- ***Check your food and stock an extra supply.*** Include food that requires no cooking in case of power failure. Make sure you have a supply of the proper food and medicine. Make sure pets and animals have shelter and a water supply.
- ***Be careful when using fireplace, stoves, or space heaters.*** Proper ventilation is essential to avoid a deadly build-up of carbon monoxide. Don't use charcoal inside as it gives off large amounts of carbon monoxide. Keep flammable material away from space heaters and do not overload electric circuits.
- ***Dress for the conditions when outdoors.*** Wear several layers of light-weight, warm clothing. Outer garments should be tightly woven, waterproof and hooded. For the hands, mittens, snub at the wrists, offer better protection than fingered gloves.
- ***Be careful when shoveling snow.*** It is extremely hard work for anyone in less than prime physical condition. It can bring on a heart attack, a major cause of death during and after winter storms.

In Your Vehicle:

- ***Get your car winterized before winter arrives.*** The following items should be checked; ignition system, cooling system, fuel system, battery, lights, tires, heater, brakes, wipers, defroster, oil, exhaust. Keep water out of your fuel tank by keeping it full.
- ***Carry a winter storm kit.*** It should include; flashlight, windshield scraper, paper towels, extra clothes, matches/candles, booster cables, compass, maps, sand, chains, blankets, high calorie non-perishable food.
- ***Winter travel by car is serious business.*** If the storm exceeds or tests your driving ability, seek available shelter immediately.
- ***Plan your travel.*** Try not to travel alone and drive in convoy when possible.
- ***Drive carefully and defensively.*** Pump your breaks when trying to stop on snow or ice covered roads.



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Know the Meanings of Advisories, Watches and Warnings

Winter Storm Watch: A watch is used when the risk of hazardous winter weather has increased significantly, there is a strong possibility it will reach warning criteria, and falls in the 12 to 48 hour portion of the forecast.

Warning: Warnings are issued when an event is occurring, is imminent, or has a high probability of occurrence. Warnings are issued for events that can be life threatening. The following warnings can be issued:

- **Blizzard Warning:** Sustained wind or frequent gusts greater than or equal to 35 mph accompanied by falling and/ or blowing snow, frequently reducing visibility to less than 1/4 mile for three hours or more.
- **Ice Storm Warning:** Ice accumulation of 1/4 inch or more.
- **Winter Storm Warning:** Issued for snow events of 6 inches or more, sleet accumulations of 1/2 inch or more, or a combination of winter precipitation which will create life threatening conditions.
- **Wind Chill Warning:** Wind chill temperature of minus 25 degrees F or colder.

Advisory: These are issued for lesser events that while presenting an inconvenience, do not pose an immediate threat of death, injury, or significant property damage.

- **Winter Weather Advisory:** Issued for average snowfall of 3 to 5 inches, sleet accumulation of less than 1/2 inch, or a combination of winter precipitation which will produce hazardous conditions. At forecaster discretion, an advisory can be issued for lesser amounts of snowfall if the timing of the event creates hazardous conditions.
- **Freezing Rain Advisory:** Light freezing rain which produces ice accumulations less than 1/4 inch.
- **Wind Chill Advisory:** Wind chill values of minus 15 to minus 24 degrees F.