



Red Cross Offers Safety Tips Ahead Of Winter Weather/severe Weather In Missouri And Arkansas

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ST. LOUIS — The American Red Cross of Missouri and Arkansas is coordinating with local emergency management officials and community partners for potential community needs as winter weather is expected to move into the two-state area along with the potential for severe storms in Arkansas.

The first winter storm of the season is expected in Missouri on New Year's Day, according to the National Weather Service. Heavy snowfall is possible in northwest and central Missouri with possible ice accumulations from central to southern Missouri. Severe weather is forecast for Arkansas starting Friday into Saturday with potential for heavy rainfall and strong winds, transitioning to much colder weather into Sunday. Dangerous cold temperatures and life-endangering wind chills are also expected in portions of the two-state area.

American Red Cross of Missouri and Arkansas offers the following tips to stay safe during these possible weather situations:

- Assemble an **emergency preparedness kit** to ensure you and your family have enough bottled water, non-perishable food, and other items to stay safe at home for a few days without power if needed. For a specific list of items: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/survival-kit-supplies.html>
- If you must travel, keep the **vehicle's gas tank full** to keep the fuel line from freezing and if you are required to stop due to traffic issues or detours.
- **Carry the following in your vehicle:** windshield scraper, small broom, sand or cat litter for traction, emergency supply kit with bottled water, non-perishable food, medications, and warm clothing/blankets.
- **Stay indoors if possible** and wear warm clothes. Layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing will keep you warmer than a bulky sweater. If you feel too warm, remove layers to avoid sweating; if you feel chilled, add layers.
- **Check on relatives, neighbors, and friends, particularly if they are elderly or live alone.**
- **Protect pipes from freezing** by taking the following precautions.:
 - Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
 - Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals up out of the reach of children.
 - When the weather is very cold outside, let the cold water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe - even at a trickle - helps prevent pipes from freezing.
 - Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night. By temporarily suspending the use of lower nighttime temperatures, you may incur a higher heating bill, but you can prevent a much more costly repair job if pipes freeze and burst.
 - If you will be going away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55° F.
- See additional tips <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winter-storm/frozen-pipes.html>

The following steps are suggested to help pipes thaw:

- If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, suspect a frozen pipe. Likely places for frozen pipes include against exterior walls or where your water service enters your home through the foundation.
- Keep the faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt, water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through the pipe will help melt ice in the pipe.
- Apply heat to the section of pipe using an electric heating pad wrapped around the pipe, an electric hair dryer, a portable space heater (kept away from flammable materials), or by wrapping pipes with towels soaked in hot water. Do not use a blowtorch, kerosene or propane heater, charcoal stove, or other open flame device.
- Apply heat until full water pressure is restored. If you can't thaw the pipe, call a licensed plumber.
- Check all other faucets in your home to find out if you have additional frozen pipes. If one pipe freezes, others may freeze, too.

Stay safe outside:

If you must go outside, protect yourself from winter storm hazards:

- **Wear layered clothing**, mittens or gloves, and a hat. Outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent. Mittens or gloves and a hat will prevent the loss of body heat.
- **Cover your mouth** to protect your lungs from severely cold air. Avoid taking deep breaths; minimize talking.
- Watch for signs of **hypothermia** and **frostbite**.
- Know the signs of **hypothermia** - confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and severe shivering. If someone has these symptoms, they should get immediate medical attention.
- Watch for symptoms of **frostbite** including numbness, flushed gray, white, blue or yellow skin discoloration, numbness or waxy feeling skin.
- **Keep dry**. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses much of its insulating value and transmits heat rapidly away from the body.

Pet Safety

Winter is difficult on our pets. Learn how to keep your furry friends safe during this cold, snowy weather. **Bring animals inside** or ensure they have access to appropriate shelter, food and non-frozen water outside. <https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/Winter-Safety-Tips-for-Your-Pets.html>

Download Red Cross APPSDownload the Red Cross Emergency App for instant access to weather alerts for their area and where loved ones live. Expert medical guidance and a hospital locator are included in the First Aid App in case travelers encounter any mishaps. Both apps are available to download for free in app stores or at redcross.org/apps.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or cruzrojaamericana.org, or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).