



# Monmouth County Winter Emergency Preparation Checklist

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## Step 1: Get a Kit

- ✓ Get an Emergency Supply Kit which includes items like non-perishable food, water, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra flashlights and batteries.
- ✓ Thoroughly check and update your family's Emergency Supply Kit before winter approaches and add the following supplies in preparation for winter weather:
  - **Rock salt** or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways. Visit the Environmental Protection Agency for a complete list of recommended products.
  - **Sand** to improve traction.
  - Sufficient **heating fuel**. You may become isolated in your home and regular fuel sources may be cut off. Store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood-burning stove.
  - **Snow shovels** and other snow removal equipment.
  - Also include **adequate clothing and blankets** to keep you warm.

## Step 2: Make a Plan: Prepare Your Family

- ✓ Make a Family Communications Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- ✓ Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
- ✓ It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.
- ✓ You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, daycare and school. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one.
- ✓ Take a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class from your local Citizen Corps chapter. Keep your training current.
- ✓ Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or other local news channels for critical information from the National Weather Service (NWS). Be alert to changing weather conditions.
- ✓ Minimize travel. If travel is necessary, keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle.
- ✓ Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.

## Step 3: Be Informed: Prepare Your Home

- ✓ Make sure your home is well insulated and that you have weather stripping around your doors and windowsills to keep the warm air inside.
- ✓ Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- ✓ Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).
- ✓ Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk as more people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.
- ✓ Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors or employees.
- ✓ Hire a contractor to check the structural stability of the roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow - or water, if drains on flat roofs do not work.

## Step 4: Winterize Your Vehicle

- ✓ If you have a car, fill the gas tank in case you have to leave. In addition, check or have a mechanic check the following items on your car:
  - **Antifreeze levels** - ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
  - **Battery and ignition system** - should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean.
  - **Brakes** - check for wear and fluid levels.
  - **Exhaust system** - check for leaks and crimped pipes and repair or replace as necessary. **Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.**

- **Fuel and air filters** - replace and keep water out of the system by using additives and maintaining a full tank of gas.
- **Heater and defroster** - ensure they work properly.
- **Lights and flashing hazard lights** - check for serviceability.
- **Oil** - check for level and weight. Heavier oils congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.
- **Thermostat** - ensure it works properly.
- **Tires** - make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions.
- **Windshield wiper equipment** - repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.
- Update the **emergency kits** in your vehicles with:
  - a shovel
  - windshield scraper and small broom
  - flashlight
  - battery powered radio
  - extra batteries
  - water
  - snack food
  - matches
  - extra hats, socks and mittens
  - first aid kit with pocket knife
  - necessary medications
  - blanket(s)
  - tow chain or rope
  - road salt and sand
  - booster cables
  - emergency flares
  - fluorescent distress flag