



# Extreme Cold Weather Precautions

The following cold weather safety reminders are helpful for the subzero temperatures many of us experience during the winter months. Consider using these tips both at work and at home.

## COLD WEATHER SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Review your company's emergency plans. There are many types of emergencies that can occur due to extremely cold weather. Power outages, furnace failure and fire are a few examples. Prior to a cold weather event, review and update the contact information in your organization's emergency messaging system or calling tree.
- Call your supervisor for instructions regarding building closures and work activity.
- Make sure smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors are working. These devices will give you the earliest possible warning that something is wrong so that everyone can escape safely.
- Keep thermostats set at the lowest comfortable temperature as furnaces may struggle to keep the building warm. Wear warm clothes and do not use an alternate heat source.
- Fires caused from the use of space heaters are very common during spells of cold, frigid temperatures. In fact, during a recent five-year period, one in every seven space heater fires has caused a fire-related death. Do not use space heaters at your workplace. If a furnace failure occurs, follow your organization's emergency procedures.
- Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. CO poisoning is another huge risk during extremely cold weather. The use of propane or charcoal grills or generators inside a building or garage—even with the door open—poses a serious risk of CO poisoning. In addition, never use a gas oven to generate heat.
- Use generators outdoors and away from windows, doors and vents. Point the exhaust away from the building. Do not use a generator unless you have been trained to do so. Always be sure to test a generator before using it in an emergency situation or power outage.
- Gasoline should be stored in approved containers in small quantities outside of the building. Always allow equipment to cool before refueling to prevent vapors from igniting.
- Clear snow away from furnace and dryer vents. Keep outside furnace, hot water and dryer vents clear of driving snow to prevent flue gases from backing up into the building and creating a carbon monoxide hazard.

- In case of a power outage, use flashlights and battery-operated candles. In most commercial buildings, emergency lighting systems will activate in the event of a power outage. Flashlights and battery-operated candles can also be used for safety. Do not use flame-burning candles.
- If a building is unoccupied, do not turn the heat all the way off. Also, if there is a possibility of a pipe freezing, let water drip from the pipe. This may help prevent the pipes from freezing. Open cupboards under sinks to let heat circulate around the pipes as well.
- Electronics safety: Do not leave electronic equipment in vehicles as damage may occur. Do not use a cold car cellphone battery charger. Let it warm up first.
- Travel precautions: Dress for the weather. Wear a hat, gloves, boots, a scarf, and a heavy jacket. If you must travel and weather is extreme, inform a supervisor (or friend or relative if you are not on duty) of your proposed route and expected time of arrival.

Periodically start vehicles to help ensure they will turn over in the subzero temperatures.

Make sure all fluids are full, including the vehicle's gas tank.

For more information on cold weather safety, please visit [www.cdc.gov/Features/WinterWeather/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/Features/WinterWeather/index.html).

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

### Follow these safety rules if you become stranded in your vehicle:

- Stay with your vehicle unless safety is no more than 100 yards away. Continue to move your arms and legs. Be aware of your surroundings so you can describe them to emergency dispatch to help emergency responders find your location.
- Clear snow from vehicle tailpipes. Recently, two children from Boston died from carbon monoxide poisoning while sitting inside running vehicles where the tailpipes were clogged with snow.
- Keep your vehicle visible by putting a bright cloth on the antenna, turning on the inside overhead light (when the engine is running) and raising the hood when snow stops falling.
- Run the engine and heater only 10 minutes every hour.
- Keep a downwind window cracked open.
- Keep the vehicle's gas tank full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.
- Use wintertime formula windshield washer fluid.
- Prepare a winter emergency kit to keep in your car in case you become stranded. Include:
  - » Blankets
  - » Food and water
  - » Booster/jumper cables, flares, a tire inflator, and a bag of sand or cat litter (for traction)
  - » Compass and maps
  - » Flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries
  - » First-aid kit
  - » Plastic bags (for sanitation)



The information contained in this report was obtained from sources which to the best of the writer's knowledge are authentic and reliable. Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc. makes no guarantee of results and assumes no liability in connection with either the information herein contained or the safety suggestions herein made. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that every acceptable safety procedure is contained herein or that abnormal or unusual circumstances may not warrant or require further or additional procedures.

Gallagher Bassett Risk Control Consulting Services  
 2850 Golf Road, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008  
 800.984.8847 • [www.gbriskcontrol.com](http://www.gbriskcontrol.com)