

Winter Hazard Awareness

Awareness of winter hazards saves lives. Know how to prepare and respond to Minnesota winters. Most Minnesotans, through years of practice and experience, are knowledgeable about winter weather conditions. We know how to dress, drive, be active outdoors and generally get through the winter with our lives, homes and property intact. Nonetheless, deaths and injuries occur every winter because people fail to take precautions.

Carelessness, overconfidence, ignorance and innocence can lead to damage, injury or death from winter weather conditions.

Quick Winter Weather Tips

- **Dress to suit the weather.** Thin layers of loose-fitting clothes will trap body heat and aid air circulation. Outer clothing should be hooded, tightly woven, and water-repellant. Mittens are warmer than gloves. Wear a hat – most body heat is lost through the head.
- **Check the weather forecast before going outdoors or traveling.** Pay particular attention to wind-chill, which can create dangerously cold conditions. Monitor the National Weather Service forecasts, statements, watches, and warnings for the latest information on a developing winter storm. Their website is: www.noaa.gov
- **Watch for signs of hypothermia and frostbite, especially in the very young and the elderly.** Symptoms of hypothermia are shivering, confusion, and loss of muscular control. Frostbite causes loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities such as finger, toes, tip of nose, and ear lobes. If you see these symptoms, get medical attention immediately.
- **Pace your outdoor activity.** Avoid strenuous activity in extremely cold temperatures. Your heart must work harder to pump blood through constricted vessels in arms and legs.
- **Winterize your home and vehicle before the cold weather arrives.** Prepare an emergency kit for your home and one for your vehicle, and make sure your home heating system is in good working order. If possible, re-insulate your home to avoid cold air leaks and reduce heating costs.

For additional information, check out the website at: <http://www.winterweather.state.mn.us>

The website provides simple winter awareness safety tips for work, play, home and travel. There are also lesson plans, internet resources and direct links to weather warnings, road conditions and more! For additional contacts at Rice County:

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