Winter Weather

Your Preparedness

Winter 2012/2013

Indiana Winter Weather Preparedness Week is November 11-17, 2012

Governor Mitch Daniels has proclaimed November 11-17, 2012 as Winter Weather Preparedness Week in Indiana.

As cold and snow begin in earnest across Indiana, the National Weather Service (NWS), Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS), Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Indiana State Police (ISP), American Red Cross and the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) are encouraging Hoosiers to begin preparing now for what could be a long, cold winter. Preparedness Week is your reminder that you need to be ready for the hazards winter brings.

Officials from each organization will be available for interviews to help you better understand the outlook for this winter, what preparation plans are being made, and how citizens can be ready.

Winter 2011-2012 In Review

The winter of 2011-2012 was milder and less snowy than normal across the entire Hoosier State, complements of a La Nina pattern. In fact two thirds of the winter days were warmer than normal.

Unlike the winter of 2010-2011 with a strongly negative North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) that produced a cold and snowy conditions, this past winter lacked any significant snowstorm systems. A pre-winter storm dumped 8-10 inches of snow in northeast Indiana.

Over 30 inches of lake effect snow fell in LaPorte County in mid December 2011.
Photo provided by Lori Barrett

December set the tone for the winters' temperatures, averaging near 5 degrees above normal. A rather rainy early and mid month resulted in the 16th wettest December of record for Indiana. No storm systems produced any appreciable snows and many areas saw no snow for the month.

January produced a little more winter-like weather but was still a far cry from brutal January weather of the past. January 2012 temperatures averaged near 6 degrees above normal statewide, with 2/3 of the days above normal again. A few locations in the north saw subzero temperatures on a couple of days. Snowfall was closer to normal in the north while the south half of Indiana saw below average snowfall. Rainfall totals remained above normal, and statewide, this was the 30th wettest January of record. Uncommon, but not unprecedented for January, was the tornado outbreak that occurred January 17 near the Ohio river. Five tornadoes hit southern Indiana, part of a 12 tornado outbreak that also impacted central Kentucky.

Winter finished mild, with February the 20th warmest of record and the fourth month in a row with 2/3 of the days averaging above normal. Super Bowl crowds in Indianapolis experienced weather more typical of March. The wet string of weather ended and would become the beginning of the Drought of 2012 for southwest Indiana. Rainfall averaged 50% to 60% of normal in central and southern Indiana. Snowfall was once again below average, and was widespread across the state on only 4 days of the month. Like January, a rare winter tornado occurred, again not far from the Ohio river in Warrick County.

What will the 2012-2013 Winter have in store? This winter's outlook is on Page 2!

Winter 2011/2012

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A full color version of this publication is available online at: www.weather.gov/iwx

Winter Weather Your Outlook

Winter 2012/2013

Winter 2012-2013 Outlook

The December-February temperature outlook show equal chances of warmer, near and cooler than normal conditions for Indiana.

What will this upcoming winter season bring to the Hoosier state? The official outlook issued by the Climate Prediction Center (CPC) is calling for equal chances of above, near and below normal temperatures and precipitation. What does this mean exactly?

The CPC uses a combination of techniques to derive their forecasts, which includes looking at active states of the Earth's atmosphere and oceans as well as statistical analysis tools and trends in the historical data. The outlook maps provide a probability forecast based on the analysis. Equal chances (EC) indicate that an area has a 33.3 percent chance of experiencing above normal, near normal, or below normal temperatures or precipitation. The EC category is often used when there is no strong signal as to what may occur. When an area on the map is shaded as having a higher probability of above or below normal conditions, it does not necessarily mean those conditions will occur, but it means the probabilities are higher for its occurrence.

This winter, neutral conditions to possibly a weak El Nino (a warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean waters) is expected, and the atmosphere often responds in a somewhat predictable manner, which helps to guide the CPC forecast. An El Nino's impact on Indiana varies considerably depending on its strength. Given the expectation that El Nino will be weak through the winter, there is some uncertainty in this winter's long range outlook for our region. Typically during an El Nino winter, the main storm track remains to the south of the Ohio Valley, focused across the southern part of the country. It is important to note that El Nino is not the only factor to affect our winter weather. Other factors such as the NAO (North Atlantic Oscillation) and AO (Arctic Oscillation) are likely to have an even greater impact due to the expected weak El Nino, but can only be forecast a few weeks in advance with any reasonable skill. Always check for the latest updates, which are issued near the beginning and middle of each month. CPC outlooks are available at http://www.cpc.noaa.gov .

The December-February precipitation outlook suggests equal chances for wetter, near and drier than normal conditions for Indiana.

WINTER WEATHER TERMS...WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Hazardous Weather Outlook — will be issued to alert the public of the potential for hazardous winter weather. This outlook will be issued daily and will provide weather information through the next 7 days.

Winter Storm Watch — alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Winter Storm Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before the beginning of a winter storm.

Winter Storm Warning — issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet is imminent or occurring. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin.

Ice Storm Warning - An Ice Storm Warning is issued when significant and damaging ice accumulations (usually one quarter inch or more) are expected.

Advisories — issued for winter weather events that are hazardous, but not severe enough to warrant a warning. Advisories may be issued for: snow and/or blowing snow, lake effect snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, wind chill, wind, and dense fog.

Winter Weather

Winter 2012/2013

Severe Weather

Winter brings more than just snow. . .

20 inches of snow and 5 foot drifts shuts down St. Rt 168 in southern Indiana December 22, 2004.

Photo courtesy of Charlie Kiesel

High surf erodes Lake Michigan beaches at Indiana Dunes State Park December, 12, 2010

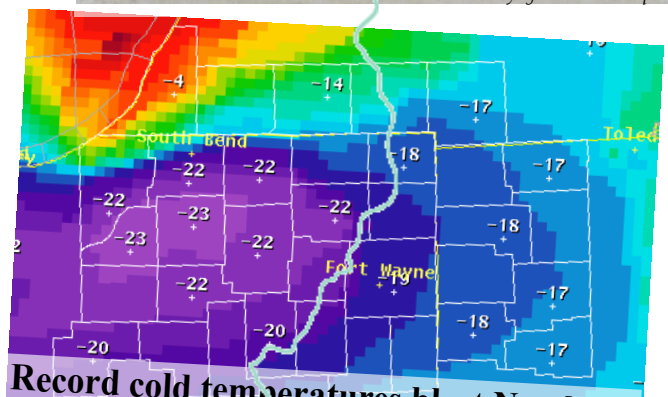
Photo courtesy of NWS Chicago

EF-1 tornado touches down in Madison County, February 28, 2011.

Photo courtesy of NWS Indianapolis

Ice and snow storm causes widespread power outages in central Indiana on February 1-2, 2011.

Photo courtesy Mike Curran



Record cold temperatures blast Northern Indiana on January 16, 2009.

Photo courtesy NWS N. Indiana

"Chicago Blizzard" drops as much as 2 feet of snow in the southern Great Lakes and brings several inches of sleet to most of Indiana February 1-2, 2011

Photo courtesy NWS Northern Indiana

Winter Weather Your Needs

Winter 2012/2013

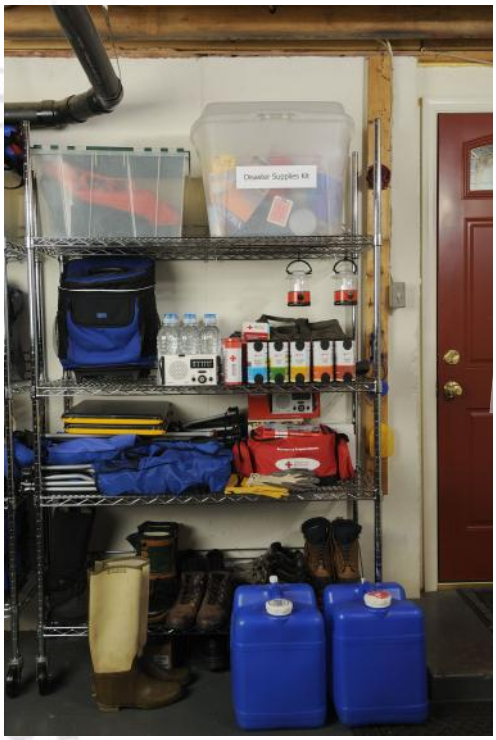
American Red Cross

Be Red Cross Ready

Get A Kit. Make A Plan. Be Informed.

Emergency Preparedness Kit for your home

- Food and water for 3 days (1 gallon of water per person per day)
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- First aid kit
- Medications (7-day supply) and medical items
- Multi-purpose tool
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Copies of personal documents
- Cell phone with chargers
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- Emergency blanket
- Baby and Pet supplies



Stay safe and warm at home

- Have extra blankets on hand.
- Use only portable heating equipment approved for indoor use and monitor it closely, especially around children. Turn it off and unplug if you leave or go to bed.
- Keep combustible materials (clothing, furniture, drapes, etc.) at least three feet from the heat source. Never drape clothes over a space heater to dry.
- Do not use a stove or oven to heat rooms.
- Don't overload electrical circuits.

For more information, visit www.indyredcross.org/brcr/wintersafety.aspx

NOAA All Hazards Radio

Keep ahead of the storm by listening to NOAA Weather Radio for the latest winter storm watches, warnings, and advisories. In addition to routine broadcasts, the Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) feature of NOAA Weather Radio activates the Emergency Alert System (EAS). EAS is used to provide notification of emergencies to the public. Blizzard and most other winter warnings will be distributed through the EAS.

All Hazards NOAA Weather Radio
NOAA's National Weather Service

Did You Know?

Special needs NOAA Weather Radios designed to meet the needs of the hearing impaired are available.

For more information, visit the NOAA Weather Radio Web Site at:
http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr
For Special Needs NOAA Weather Radio information, visit:
http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/edu/safety/specialneeds.html

Winter Weather Your Plans

Winter 2012/2013

Winter Weather Preparedness For Schools

Gathering information

- *Know where to get weather information*: Utilize NOAA Weather Radio, local Media sources, Internet, and paging services.
- *Know how and where to get road information*: State Highway Departments or Law Enforcement are often your best sources for road conditions. City and county transportation or school officials, and drivers or security teams are also excellent sources.

Alerting students and staff

- *Alert students and staff to take action*: Use mobile communications for bus drivers, and a PA system for school staff and students.

Activating plan

- *Determine when to activate plan*: Gather information about the type of winter storm, expected impact, and time of impact on the school district. The primary decision will be whether to cancel, delay, or hold classes as usual. In Watch situations, immediate action will usually not be required. When a Warning or Advisory is issued, assess the weather situation by monitoring NWS forecasts, current weather conditions, and road conditions.

Canceling or Delaying Classes

- *Determine when to cancel or delay classes*: How much time do you have before the storm impacts the area? Not only must students be transported to school safely, but also back home via bus, car, or on foot. What kind of an impact will the storm make? Will roads be impassable, or will road conditions just have a minimal effect on transportation of students, causing only small delays?

School Bus Driver Actions

- *For heavy snow or blowing and drifting snow*: Be familiar with alternate routes, stay up to date on the latest forecast, and maintain communication with school officials.
- *For ice storms*: Remain alert for downed trees, utility lines, and other road hazards. Be familiar with alternate routes. Stay up to date on the forecast and maintain communication with school officials.
- *Extreme cold*: Learn to recognize and treat symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite.

Safety Instruction

- *Educate school staff and students*: Conduct drills and hold safety programs annually.
  - Participate in Winter Weather Preparedness Week campaigns.
  - Contact your local Emergency Manager or National Weather Service Office for a speaker to discuss winter weather safety.

Winter Injuries

Winter weather claims nearly 100 lives annually.

Related to ice and snow:

- About 70% occur in automobiles
- About 25% are people caught out in the storm
- Majority are males over 40 years old

Related to exposure to cold:

- 50% are people over 60 years old
- Over 75% are males
- About 20% occur inside the home

Winter Weather

Your Driving

Winter 2012/2013

Winter Safety Tips for the Vehicle

Winter-wise Driving Tips

- Pay attention to weather reports on the radio. Allow time in your schedule for bad weather and/or traffic delays.
- Become familiar with your vehicle's winter weather operating characteristics. Front-wheel drive vehicles generally handle better than rear-wheel vehicles on slippery roads because the weight of the engine is on the drive wheels, improving traction.
- Keep your windows clear of snow and ice. Remember to clean head, tail and brake lights.
- If you need to turn on your wipers, you need to turn on your headlights.
- Bridges become slick and icy before roads. Bridge temperatures can be five to six degrees colder than roadways, so drive with extreme caution during freezing temperatures.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full. Fill the tank before you park for lengthy periods. This will help prevent fuel line freeze-up.
- Leave ample stopping time between you and the vehicle in front of you. Braking distance can be up to nine times greater on snowy, icy surfaces than on dry roads.
- If your vehicle is equipped with an Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), be sure to: STOMP firmly – depress the brake pedal. STAY on the brakes – do not pump the brakes. STEER where you want the vehicle to go.
- Gently pump non-ABS brakes to stop the vehicle. Take any corrective action gradually. You need to maintain full control of the vehicle. Refer to the vehicle operations manual for proper methods to correct skids.
- During winter travel, it is best to supply those at your destination with the following information: your cell phone number, departure time, travel route and anticipated arrival time.
- Lock your vehicle, even in bad weather. If locks freeze, heat the key. Do not pour hot water on the locks – they will refreeze.
- Stay with your vehicle while warming it up. An unattended, running car invites theft.

Survival Tips if Stranded

The best advice is to remain with the vehicle. If nothing else, you are guaranteed shelter.

Other helpful tips include:

- Tie a bright colored cloth (handkerchief, towel, etc.) to the vehicle's antenna, driver door handle or outside mirror.
- Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow. Poisonous gases can filter into the vehicle if the pipe is clogged.
- Run the engine and heater no more than 10 minutes every hour, leaving a downwind window slightly open for ventilation while the engine is running.
- Light a flare or turn on a flashlight to let others know you're stranded in the vehicle.
- Use floor mats, seat covers and blankets for added warmth. If you must leave your vehicle during a severe snow storm or blizzard, secure a line of rope or cord to yourself and the vehicle to avoid becoming lost or disoriented.
- Keep bottled water in your emergency kit of vehicle. Never eat snow. It will chill you and lower your body temperature.
- Remain calm. Chances for rescue are better if you remain calm and in your vehicle.

For more information on winter safety tips for the vehicle, visit the INDOT website at www.in.gov/indot/2439.htm, or the IDHS website at: www.getprepared.in.gov

Winter Weather Your Travel

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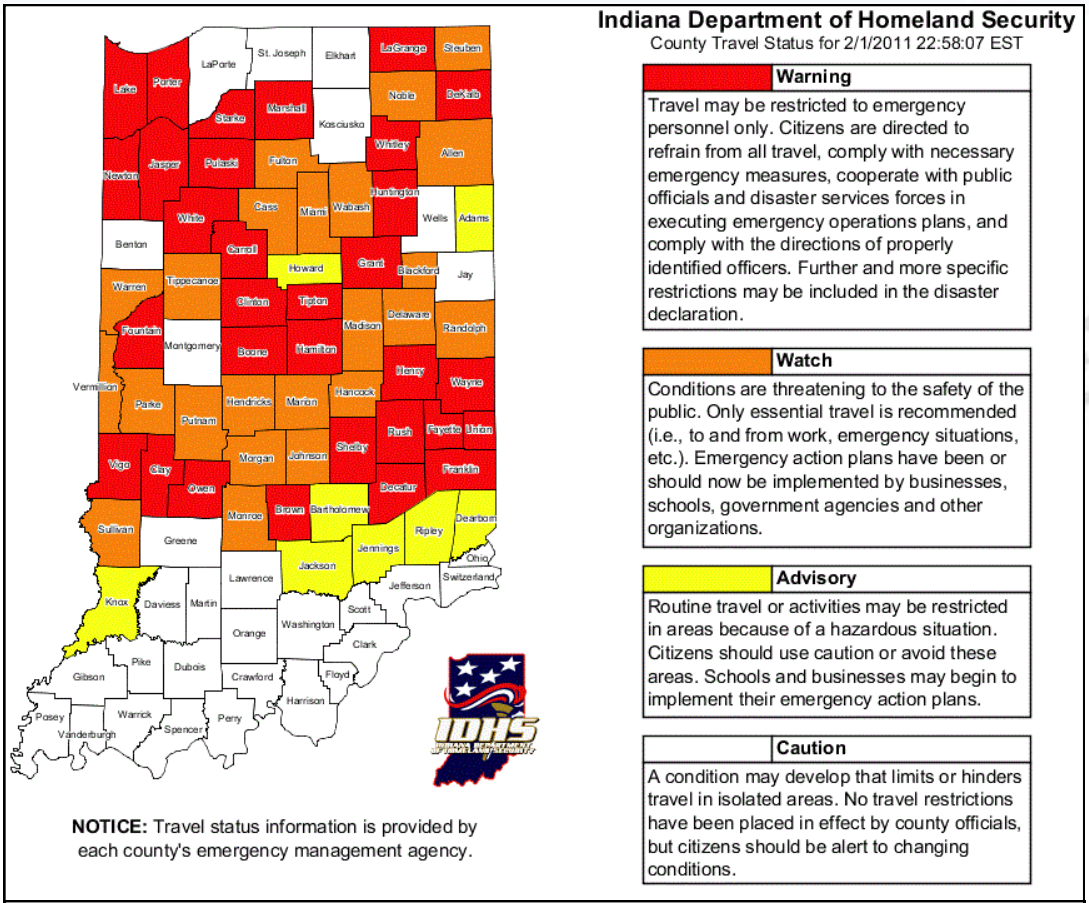
Indiana County Travel Advisories Map

Indiana has updated it's travel advisory statutes to a three tiered system statewide.

All counties in Indiana will be following the same guidelines for travel advisories, under state law.

The first level is a **travel advisory**, which tells drivers whether conditions may make travel difficult. The second level will be a **travel watch**, which permits only essential travel on the roadways. And the highest level is a **travel warning**, which means travel is forbidden under most circumstances.

This law removed language for warning levels which varied in meaning from county to county and thus makes for more unified terminology this year.



Example of County Travel Advisories map from February 1-2, 2011 snowstorm.

County Travel Advisories Map website

www.in.gov/dhs/files/travel-advisory-map/

INDOT TrafficWise website:

http://indot.carsprogram.org/main.jsf

Winter Weather

Your Vehicle

Winter 2012/2013

How to winterize your vehicle

Check tire pressure and tread depth. Consult your owner's manual for advice. Look for uneven wearing which can also be dangerous. Also, be sure to check the spare tire and make sure the jack is operating properly.

Check battery, exhaust system, heater and defroster. Make sure the battery is not past its lifespan, and that the terminals are tight and free of corrosion. Hoses and belts should be inspected for cracks. Now is the time to discover if your heater is broken - not when the temperature drops.

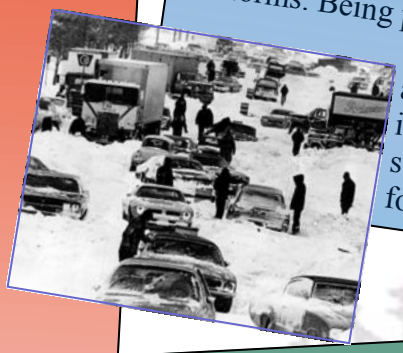
Check antifreeze. Make sure that a 50 percent antifreeze, 50 percent water mixture is at the proper radiator level. If the coolant is two years old, get it flushed and refilled.

Change oil every 3,000-5,000 miles. Consider using a lighter, "winter weight" oil. Refer to your owner's manual for guidance.

Check windshield wipers and blades: Replace the blades twice a year and make sure extra WINTER wiper fluid is on hand.

Ensure the four-wheel drive system and brakes are functioning properly.

It is a good idea to keep at least a half tank of gas in your car at all times during the winter months, to keep the fuel lines from freezing. Even with the best maintenance and cautious driving, snow, ice and freezing temperatures can sometimes still get the best of your vehicle. Hazardous winter driving conditions induce crashes, which are the leading cause of death during winter storms. Being prepared to handle potential slide-offs, crashes, and car trouble in winter is a simple but crucial step to take in preparing for the next few months.



Prepare an emergency kit for your vehicle

- ☐ At least two blankets or a sleeping bag
- ☐ Flashlight or battery-powered lantern and extra batteries
- ☐ Booster (jumper) cables
- ☐ Emergency flares
- ☐ Extra clothing, particularly boots, hats and mittens
- ☐ A steel shovel and rope to use as a lifeline
- ☐ Bottled water or juice and nonperishable high-energy foods (granola bars, raisins, nuts, peanut butter or cheese crackers)
- ☐ Thermos or container that won't allow liquids to freeze
- ☐ First-aid kit and necessary medications
- ☐ Sand or non-clumping cat litter for tire traction if your vehicle gets stuck in snow or ice
- ☐ A cell phone charger which can be adapted to vehicle use
- ☐ Ice scraper and snow brush
- ☐ Tire repair kit and pump
- ☐ Candle, matches, heat sticks/packs, lighters, hand-warmers, etc. (Be sure to crack the window if you using a heat source inside

Winter Weather

Your Safety

Winter 2012/2013

According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2008, heating equipment was the second leading cause of home fires in the United States.

Among fatal home heating fires, the leading factor contributing to the ignition of the fires was heating equipment stationed too close to flammable materials.

Tips for safe alternative heating

- Keep all flammable materials at least three feet away from heating equipment.
- Regular cleaning and annual inspections by a professional chimney sweep will help keep a fireplace free from obstructions and creosote which was the leading factor contributing to home heating fires between 2004 and 2008 according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).
- Use only paper or kindling wood, not a flammable liquid, to start a fire.
- Use only dry, seasoned wood in a fireplace or wood stove to avoid the buildup of creosote. Do not use artificial logs in wood stoves.
- If using a gas fireplace, ensure the fireplace vents properly and that there is a functioning carbon monoxide detector in the room.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand and know how to use them.

Space heater safety

- When buying a new space heater, make sure it carries the mark of an independent testing laboratory and is legal for use in your community.
- Use the proper grade of fuel for your liquid-fueled space heater and never use gasoline in any heater not approved for gasoline use.
- Refuel space heaters only in a well ventilated area and when the equipment is cool.
- Plug power cords only into outlets with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.
- Turn off space heaters whenever the room they are in is unoccupied.
- Turn off space heaters when you go to bed each night to avoid knocking them over in the dark.

Tips for reducing heating costs

- Make sure your home is properly insulated.
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to keep out cold air.
- Install a programmable thermostat and set it to lower the temperature at night and whenever the house is unoccupied.
- Keep doors and windows closed as much as possible, including overhead doors on attached garages.
- Insulate the pipes around the water heater with inexpensive, easy-to-install pipe insulation.
- Always unplug holiday lights before going to bed or leaving the house.

For more information about winter heating safety, visit www.getprepared.in.gov. For additional emergency efficiency and money saving tips contact your local utility company or visit: www.energysavers.gov.

Winter Weather Your Health

Winter 2012/2013

With a wind chill temperature of minus 50°F, frostbite will occur within 10 minutes.

At minus 30°F, frostbite will occur within 30 minutes.

Frostbite

Frostbite is damage to body tissue caused by extreme cold. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, or the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, get medical help immediately! If you must wait for help, slowly re-warm the affected areas. However, if the person is also showing signs of hypothermia, warm the body core before the extremities.

Hypothermia: Low Body Temperature

Warning Signs - Uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion.

Detection - Hypothermia occurs when the body temperature drops below 95°F. If a person's temperature is below 95°F, seek medical care immediately! If medical care is not available, begin warming the person slowly. Warm the body core before the extremities (arms and legs)! Warming the arms and legs first drives cold blood toward the heart and can lead to heart failure. If needed, use your own body heat to help. Get the person into dry clothing and wrap them in a warm blanket, covering the head and neck. Do not give the person alcohol, drugs, coffee, or any hot beverage or food; warm broth is better.

Wind Chill Chart

Temperature (°F)

Wind (mph)	Calm	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	-25	-30	-35	-40	-45
5		36	31	25	19	13	7	1	-5	-11	-16	-22	-28	-34	-40	-46	-52	-57	-63
10		34	27	21	15	9	3	-4	-10	-16	-22	-28	-35	-41	-47	-53	-59	-66	-72
15		32	25	19	13	6	0	-7	-13	-19	-26	-32	-39	-45	-51	-58	-64	-71	-77
20		30	24	17	11	4	-2	-9	-15	-22	-29	-35	-42	-48	-55	-61	-68	-74	-81
25		29	23	16	9	3	-4	-11	-17	-24	-31	-37	-44	-51	-58	-64	-71	-78	-84
30		28	22	15	8	1	-5	-12	-19	-26	-33	-39	-46	-53	-60	-67	-73	-80	-87
35		28	21	14	7	0	-7	-14	-21	-27	-34	-41	-48	-55	-62	-69	-76	-82	-89
40		27	20	13	6	-1	-8	-15	-22	-29	-36	-43	-50	-57	-64	-71	-78	-84	-91
45		26	19	12	5	-2	-9	-16	-23	-30	-37	-44	-51	-58	-65	-72	-79	-86	-93
50		26	19	12	4	-3	-10	-17	-24	-31	-38	-45	-52	-60	-67	-74	-81	-88	-95
55		25	18	11	4	-3	-11	-18	-25	-32	-39	-46	-54	-61	-68	-75	-82	-89	-97
60		25	17	10	3	-4	-11	-19	-26	-33	-40	-48	-55	-62	-69	-76	-84	-91	-98
FROSTBITE OCCURS IN:								30 minutes		10 minutes		5 minutes							

Winter Weather

Winter 2012/2013

Your Actions

When Caught in a Winter Storm

At Home or in a Building

Stay inside. When using alternative heat from a fireplace, wood stove, space heater, etc., use fire safeguards and ventilate properly.

If you have no heat:

- Close off unneeded rooms.
- Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
- Cover windows at night.

Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration.

Wear layers of loose-fitting, light-weight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration, and subsequent chill.

In a Car or Truck

Stay in your vehicle. Disorientation occurs quickly in wind-driven snow and cold.

Run the motor about ten minutes each hour for heat:

- To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, open the window a little for fresh air.
- Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.

Be visible to rescuers:

- Turn on your dome light at night when running the engine.
- Tie a colored cloth (preferably red) to your antenna or door.
- After snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help.

Exercise from time to time by vigorously moving arms, legs, fingers, and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.

Outside

Find shelter:

- Try to stay dry.
- Cover all exposed parts of the body.

If no shelter:

- Prepare a lean-to, windbreak, or snow cave for protection from the wind.
- Build a fire for heat and to attract attention.
- Place rocks around the fire to absorb and reflect heat.

January 26-28, 2009

A major storm system dumped over a foot of snow in central and southern Indiana and upwards to one inch of ice along and south of the Ohio River. The ice brought down thousands of trees and power lines, leaving thousands of homes and businesses without power.

January 7-8, 2011

A record breaking lake effect snow event dropped 3 feet of snow on South Bend, IN with 8 inches in one hour and 19 inches in 4 hours. A widespread area of 1-2 feet of snow occurred in the surrounding counties.

February 1-2, 2011

The "Chicago Blizzard" brought over a foot of snow to many locations in Northern Indiana, 1.5 inches of freezing rain and sleet to central Indiana, and winds greater than 50 mph across the entire state. Drivers were stranded on Lakeshore Dr. in Chicago where over 20 inches of snow fell.

National Weather Service
Northern Indiana
7605 E 850 N
Syracuse, IN 46567

Winter Weather Preparedness Week Material
OPEN IMMEDIATELY!

Internet Sites

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
http://www.noaa.gov
National Weather Service
http://www.weather.gov
National Weather Service Indianapolis
http://www.weather.gov/ind
National Weather Service Northern Indiana
http://www.weather.gov/iwx
National Weather Service Louisville
http://www.weather.gov/lmk
National Weather Service Paducah
http://www.weather.gov/pah
National Weather Service Chicago
http://www.weather.gov/lot
National Weather Service Wilmington
http://www.weather.gov/iln
NWS Office of Meteorology Winter Weather Page
http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/winter

NOAA Weather Radio
http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr
Climate Prediction Center
http://www.cpc.noaa.gov
Federal Emergency Management Agency
http://www.fema.gov
Ready America
http://www.ready.gov/
Be Red Cross Ready
http://www.indyredcross.org/BRCR
Indiana Department of Homeland Security
http://www.in.gov/dhs/
Indiana Department of Transportation
http://www.in.gov/indot/
Indiana State Police
http://www.in.gov/isp/
Indiana Department of Education
http://www.doe.in.gov/