

WINDSTORM EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

WHEELLE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS TIP

Keep one or more places in your home stocked with a small flashlight, extra batteries and utility contact information in case of a power outage. If the power goes out, go to that place first. Home communication centers, catch-all drawers or bedside tables make great locations.

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Getting prepared prior to windstorms occurring will keep you safe and comfortable. Today, let's take a look at how you can be prepared for windstorms. Below are some of the risks associated with a major windstorm:

- Downed trees
- Blowing debris
- Electrocution from downed power lines
- Possibility of loss of electricity, water, gas and other utilities including phone/cell service
- Carbon monoxide poisoning from using charcoal grills inside the home or from improper generator ventilation
- Food spoiling in the refrigerator/freezer because of power failure
- Loss of life (hit by trees, touching downed power lines) or injuries
- Lack of communication due to lack of power for cell and cordless phones
- Damaged buildings
- Power outages for an extended period of time
- Transportation routes affected by downed trees, structures and power lines

POWER LINE SAFETY

Yikes! That's still HOT! Did you know that a downed power line can cause the ground around it to be energized? Follow these tips to stay safe around downed power lines:

- Assume it is live. Never touch a downed power line or anything near it.
- Stay as far away from it as you can and immediately call your local utility company.
- If you find yourself near a downed power line, shuffle your feet away from it to avoid ground shock.



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POWER OUTAGES

During windstorms, power outages in particular can be the source of much danger. What should you do in a power outage?

- Report power outages or downed power lines as soon as they occur by calling your utility company.
- If your power goes out, use flashlights. Avoid candles, oil lamps or anything with an open flame.
- Use light sticks or small flashlights as landing strips for trip-prone areas in your home. Pick up clutter from floors to avoid stubbed toes.
- Keep your contact devices (cellphones, smartphones, laptops) fully charged in case of a power outage or prior to heading out into the elements for an extended length of time. To ensure backup, bring chargers with you.
- The best form of communication during a power outage is a landline with a corded phone. It doesn't need to be charged!

WHAT IS CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING?

Carbon monoxide poisoning occurs after enough inhalation of carbon monoxide (CO), a toxic gas. It is very difficult for people to detect carbon monoxide because it is colorless, odorless, tasteless and, initially non-irritating. Carbon monoxide is a product of incomplete combustion of organic matter due to insufficient oxygen supply to enable complete oxidation to carbon dioxide (CO₂). Carbon monoxide is produced by charcoal and gasoline-powered tools, heaters and cooking equipment, such as charcoal grills, barbecues and generators. Exposures at 100 parts per million or greater can be dangerous to human health.

Symptoms of mild acute poisoning include lightheadedness, confusion, headaches, vertigo and flu-like symptoms. Larger exposures can lead to significant toxicity of the heart and central nervous system, and even death. During prolonged power outages, the need for food and heat — if you are not prepared — can cause people to become forgetful of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning. Refer to www.TakeWinterByStorm.org/wind for carbon monoxide prevention tips.

WHEELLE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS TIP

Too close to a downed power line? Do the shuffle! Dance away by keeping both feet on the ground and shuffling them away from the downed power line. (Bet you never thought knowing a dance would be part of winter weather preparedness!)

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For more winter weather preparedness tips, checklists and information, go to www.TakeWinterByStorm.org.