

Emergency Preparedness

Severe winter stormⁱ – Blizzard

Across Canada, we face a number of natural hazards, which can vary from region to region. Knowing what to do is an important part of being prepared. Find out about risks in your region and how to prepare for different situations. Canadians should also be aware that other hazards can trigger emergencies that may affect them.

Facts about blizzards

- A blizzard, in general, is when winds of 40 km/h or greater are expected to cause widespread reductions in visibility to 400 metres or less, due to blowing snow, or blowing snow in combination with falling snow, for at least four hours.
- Blizzards come in on a wave of cold arctic air, bringing snow, bitter cold, high winds and poor visibility in blowing snow. While these conditions must last for at least four hours to be designated a blizzard, they may last for several days.
- Poor visibility, low temperatures and high winds combine to create a significant hazard.
- Blizzards with high winds are most common in the eastern Arctic.
- When there are heavy snowfalls in wide-open areas, visibility can be virtually zero during heavy blowing snow or a blizzard. You can easily lose your way.



Have a plan, prepare yourself and your family for severe winters storms in Iqaluit

You should be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for a minimum of 72 hours during a blizzard.

When a severe storm is on the horizon, the Meteorological Service of Canada issues watches, warnings and advisories through radio and television stations, the Weather Office website, automated telephone information lines and Environment Canada's Weatheradio.



What to do before the blizzard

- If a severe winter storm is forecast, secure everything that might be blown around or torn loose outdoors. Flying objects can injure people and damage property.
- Always stock up on heating fuel and ready-to-eat food, as well as battery-powered or wind-up flashlights and radios – and extra batteries. For a complete list of emergency supplies, see minimum basic emergency kits.
- You may want to go to the sheltered area that you and your family chose for your personal emergency plan.
- If a blizzard or heavy blowing snow is forecast, you may want to string a lifeline between your house and any outbuildings to which you may have to go during the storm.



What to do during a blizzard

During a blizzard shelter-in-place is ideal for your safety

You should "shelter-in-place" during a blizzard.

You may also be instructed to "shelter-in-place". This means you must remain inside your home or office and protect yourself there.

The following steps will help maximize your protection while at home:

- When a blizzard winter storm hits, stay indoors.
- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- Get your emergency kit and make sure the radio is working.
- Ideally stay in an interior room
- Generally, the animals should be placed indoors. Once they are inside, secure all openings to the outside.
- You can use a cellular telephone during a severe winter storm and or a land-line telephone.
- Monitor your radio, city website, Facebook and Twitter or television until you are told all is safe or are advised to evacuate.
- If you are advised by officials to evacuate, do so. Take your emergency kit with you.

The following steps should be taken if travelling by car:

- If you must travel during a winter storm, do so during the day and let someone know your route and arrival time.
- Keep watch for traffic or searchers.
- If your car gets stuck in a blizzard or snowstorm, remain calm and stay in your car. Allow fresh air in your car by opening the window slightly on the sheltered side – away from the wind. You can run the car engine about 10 minutes every half-hour if the exhaust system is working well. Beware of exhaust fumes and check the exhaust pipe periodically to make sure it is not blocked with snow. Remember: you can't smell potentially fatal carbon monoxide fumes.
- To keep your hands and feet warm, exercise them periodically. In general, it is a good idea to keep moving to avoid falling asleep. If you do try to shovel the snow from around your car, avoid overexerting yourself.
- Overexertion in the bitter cold can cause death as a result of sweating or a heart attack.



Evacuation orders

Authorities will not ask you to leave your home unless they have reason to believe you are in danger.

If you are ordered to evacuate, follow these steps:

- If you must go outside dress for the weather. Outer clothing should be tightly woven. The jacket should have a hood. Wear mittens – they are warmer than gloves – and a hat, as large portion of body heat is lost through the head.
- Proceed to the appropriate emergency evacuation shelter identified by local authorities.
- Take your emergency kit with you.
- Bring essential medications and copies of prescriptions.
- Bring a cellular phone (if you have one).
- Bring your pets (pets are not allowed in some emergency shelters, so plan in advance for a **pet-friendly location**).
- Make sure you are safe before assisting others.

If you have time:

- Call or email your contact. Tell them where you are going and when you expect to arrive. (Once you are safe, let them know. Tell them if any family members have become separated.)
- Leave a note telling others when you left and where you are going.

Protect your home:

- Shut off water, if officials tell you to.
- Shut off electricity, if officials tell you to.
- Shut off heating systems, if officials tell you to.
- Lock your home, close and lock windows properly.

In case of an emergency, call emergency services

During an emergency, you may not have time to make alternative plans. That's why it is important to know who to call and what to do under different circumstances.

Different levels of organizations respond progressively as an emergency escalates and their resources are needed. Keep a land-line phone in your home, as most cordless phones will not work during a power outage.

The first ones to respond are closest to the nature of your emergency.

- Call the phone numbers below to either report a fire, a crime or to save a life.
- When notifying emergency services of your location, provide the exact building number and nearest intersection.
- For non-emergency calls, use the seven-digit numbers listed in your local phone book.

Important telephone numbers during a blizzard



Report a fire – 979-4422
(For non-emergency calls – 979-5650)



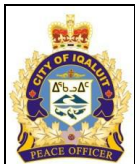
Police RCMP – 979-1111
(For non-emergency calls – 979-0123)



Ambulance – 979-4422
(For non-emergency calls – 979-5650)



Blizzard telephone line – 979-5600



Municipal Enforcement – 979-5650



Nunavut Emergency Management –
Weather information service 979-6448
1-844-580-3639



After the blizzard — tips and information

These are general instructions that apply to many emergencies but not every situation is the same. These tips can also apply during an emergency. Also, please read the sections on specific disasters.

- Check on neighbours, especially the elderly or people with disabilities.
- Check you exits.
- Use the battery-operated radio from your emergency kit to listen for information and instructions.
- Continue to monitor your radio, city website, Facebook and Twitter or television for additional information regarding the blizzard.
- Check if tap water is available, fill a bathtub and other containers in case the supply gets cut off.
- If there is no running water, remember that you may have water available in a hot water tank, toilet reservoir or in ice cube trays.
- Do not flush toilets if you suspect that sewer lines are broken.
- If the power has been off for several hours, check the food in the refrigerator and freezer in case it has spoiled.

Get an emergency kit

In an emergency, you will need some basic supplies. You may need to get by without power or tap water. Be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.

You may have some of the items already, such as food, water and a battery-operated or crank flashlight. The key is to make sure they are organized and easy to find. Would you be able to find your flashlight in the dark? Make sure your kit is easy to carry and everyone in the household knows where it is. Keep it in a backpack, duffle bag or suitcase with wheels, in an easy-to-reach, accessible place, such as your front-hall closet. If you have many people in your household, your emergency kit could get heavy. It's a good idea to separate some of these supplies in backpacks. That way, your kit will be more portable and each person can personalize his or her own grab-and-go emergency kit.

Your basic emergency kit should include:

- Water – at least two litres of water per person per day; include small bottles that can be carried easily in case of an evacuation order.
- Food that won't spoil, such as canned food, energy bars and dried foods (replace food and water once a year).
- Manual can-opener.
- Crank or battery-powered flashlight (and extra batteries). Replace batteries once a year.
- Crank or battery-powered radio (and extra batteries).
- First-aid kit
- Extra keys to your car and house.
- Keep some cash in smaller bills, such as \$10 bills, as automated bank machines and their networks may not work during an emergency. You may have difficulty using debit or credit cards.
- If applicable, other items such as prescription medication, infant formula, equipment for people with disabilities, or food, water and medication for your pets or service animal (personalize according to your needs).



Recommended additional items

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> two additional litres of water per person per day (for cooking and cleaning) <input type="checkbox"/> candles and matches or lighter (place in sturdy containers and do not burn unattended) <input type="checkbox"/> change of clothing and footwear (for each household member) <input type="checkbox"/> sleeping bag or warm blanket (for each household member) <input type="checkbox"/> toiletries <input type="checkbox"/> hand sanitizer <input type="checkbox"/> toilet paper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> utensils <input type="checkbox"/> garbage bags <input type="checkbox"/> household chlorine bleach or water purifying tablets <input type="checkbox"/> basic tools (hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdrivers, work gloves, pocket knife) <input type="checkbox"/> small fuel-operated stove and fuel <input type="checkbox"/> whistle (to attract attention) <input type="checkbox"/> duct tape (to tape up windows, doors, air vents, etc.) |
|--|--|

Pre-packaged emergency kits

Canadian Red Cross kits can be purchased at <http://www.shop.redcross.ca>. Various other kits and supplies are also available for sale from other commercial entities.



Resources

Visit www.GetPrepared.gc.ca for more resources to help you and your family prepare for all types of emergencies.

On your mobile device at m.GetPrepared.ca.

Nunavut Emergency Management
<http://cgs.gov.nu.ca/en/commEmergency.aspx>

Environment Canada Weather Iqaluit
https://www.weather.gc.ca/city/pages/nu-21_metric_e.html

Canadian Red Cross, visit www.redcross.ca/prepare.

City of Iqaluit Emergency and Protective Services

**P.O. Box 460
Iqaluit, Nunavut
X0A 1H0
867-979-5600
www.city.iqaluit.nu.ca**

Posted May 2016

i Emergency Preparedness Canada – Getprepared.gc.ca