



# American Red Cross

of Greater Grand Rapids

American Red Cross of  
Greater Grand Rapids  
1050 Fuller Ave. NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
[www.greatergrandrapids.redcross.org](http://www.greatergrandrapids.redcross.org)

## News Release NEWS RELEASE

*A Safe Community Begins With You*

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**For Immediate Release**

## Red Cross Urges Preparedness for Winter Weather

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., (January 13, 2009)** – As temperatures drop across the country and we head full steam ahead into the winter season, the **American Red Cross of Greater Grand Rapids** is urging families in our community to take the following actions now to prepare for hazardous winter weather.

“Winter storms can be ‘deceptive killers’ since the majority of winter-related deaths are caused by events related to the heavy snowfall, high winds, and freezing rain that often accompanies them,” said Lisa Marks, CEO of your local Red Cross. “People can become trapped at home without utilities or other services. Motorists can become stranded in their vehicles. Walking and driving can become hazardous. But people can stay safer if they listen to the advice of local authorities and take action to get prepared ahead of time.”

The Red Cross recommends everyone prepare for severe weather conditions in the following ways:

### **Get a Disaster Supplies Kit For Your Home:**

- Three-day supply of water (one gallon of water per person per day for drinking and hygiene).
- Three-day supply of non perishable, high-energy food and a manual can opener.
- First aid kit and essential medications.
- Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio.
- Flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Extra warm clothing, including boots, mittens, and a hat.
- Copies of important documents (birth certificate, title/deed to home, insurance policies, etc) in a water-proof container.

### **Get a Disaster Supplies Kit For Your Vehicle:** (all of the above plus)

- Blankets or sleeping bags.
- Jumper cables.
- Fire extinguisher (5 lb., A-B-C type).

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- Compass and road maps.
- Shovel.
- Tire repair kit and pump.
- Flares.
- Extra clothing to keep dry.
- Sack of sand or cat litter (for tire traction).
- Tow rope.

#### **Make a Winter Storm Plan:**

- Be prepared to shelter at home in case of severe weather. Have additional food and water stored to last seven to fourteen days.
- Have extra blankets on hand.
- Ensure that each member of your household has a warm coat, gloves or mittens, a hat, and water-resistant boots.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit for your home and vehicle.
- Have your vehicle winterized before the weather gets severe.
- Decide how you would communicate with your family members should you be separated and unable to travel when a winter storm hits.

#### **Be Informed:**

- Learn how you would receive information from local officials should hazardous winter weather affect your neighborhood.
- Know the difference between a winter storm WATCH (a winter storm is possible in your area) and a winter storm WARNING (a winter storm is headed for your area).
- Consider getting first aid and CPR training in case you need to respond in an emergency before professionals arrive on the scene.

#### **If the Power Goes Out:**

- Do not use candles for lighting if the power goes out. Use flashlights only.
- Use items in the refrigerator first, then freezer, then non-perishable foods.
- Use generators correctly – If you have a portable generator and the power goes out, always plan to keep the generator outdoors. Never operate it inside, including the basement, garage, carport or near any open windows. Connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. Do not hook up a generator directly to your home's wiring.

**Hazardous Winter Travel:** The American Red Cross strongly urges everyone to monitor weather reports and follow the directions of local authorities. If travel is absolutely necessary during potentially dangerous winter weather, inform someone of your travel route, destination and expected arrival time. Store a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle and remember to keep the gas tank near full to avoid ice building up in the gas tank and fuel lines.

*In Case of Snow or Black Ice:*

- Stay with your vehicle. Do not try to walk to safety as you risk developing hypothermia and/or frostbite.
- Tie a brightly colored cloth (preferably red) to the antenna for rescuers to see.
- Start the vehicle and use the heater for about 10 minutes every hour. Keep the exhaust pipe clear so fumes won't back up in the vehicle.
- As you sit, move your arms and legs to keep blood circulating and to help you stay warm.
- Keep one window away from the blowing wind slightly open to let in air.
- Leave the overhead light on inside the vehicle when the engine is running so you can be seen.
- After the snow has stopped falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help.

*In Case of a Flood:*

- Move to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks, and storm drains. Do not drive around barricades . . . they are there for your safety.

If your vehicle stalls in rapidly rising waters, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground.

**For more information about how you can prepare for a variety of winter weather-related disasters including winter and ice storms, power outages and floods, contact your local American Red Cross at (616) 456-8661 or visit [www.greatergrandrapids.redcross.org](http://www.greatergrandrapids.redcross.org).**

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**American Red Cross of Greater Grand Rapids**

Governed by volunteers and supported by community donations, the American Red Cross of Greater Grand Rapids is dedicated to saving lives and helping people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Your local Red Cross annually mobilizes relief to hundreds of families affected by disasters, trains thousands of people in lifesaving skills and more. For more information visit our website at [www.greatergrandrapids.redcross.org](http://www.greatergrandrapids.redcross.org), call us at (616) 456-8661 or stop by our offices at 1050 Fuller Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.