

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE CARIBOU ME
1000 AM EST FRI NOV 04 2011

The National Weather Service offices that serve New England have declared the week of October 31 through November 4 **Winter Weather Awareness Week**. In conjunction with **Winter Weather Awareness Week**, the National Weather Service Office in Caribou will be issuing Public Information Statements concerning many aspects of winter weather and winter weather preparedness. This is the fifth in a series of five Public Information Statements to be issued this week.

Winter Weather Preparedness

In northern New England, everyone is potentially at risk during winter storms and cold weather. The actual threat to you depends on your specific situation, the amount of risk you are willing to take, and how prepared you are for the possibility that something may go wrong.

Based on statistics, the majority of winter weather related fatalities are men, probably because men take more risks, and do not prepare for the possibility that something may go wrong. The majority of the fatalities related to snow and ice are actually men over 40 years old. About 70 percent of the fatalities occur in automobiles while about 25 percent are people caught out in the storm. As for the hypothermia related fatalities, about 75 percent are men, about 50 percent of the fatalities are people over 60 years old, and about 20 percent of the fatalities occur inside the home.

Your Vehicle

Before winter begins, be sure that your vehicle is ready for winter conditions. Check the antifreeze and battery to make sure they can withstand northern New England's cold winter temperatures. Check your tires to be sure that you will have adequate traction in the snow. In addition, keep your gas tank near full to avoid water and ice in the fuel or fuel lines.

As much as possible, try to avoid traveling in dangerous conditions. Do not take chances. Be prepared for the possibility that you may become stuck and stranded, particularly if you drive on infrequently traveled roads. When riding in a car, be sure to have the appropriate winter clothing with you. If you are stranded on the way to where you are going, you will need those warm clothes. In a storm, whether big or small, allow extra time to get where you are going. The first half inch of snow is sometimes the most slippery. Slow down. When driving, remember that there are many hazards, such as black ice, that you will not see before it is too late. Keep all your windows clear of snow and ice and clear snow away from your car's headlights and taillights. Be sure that someone who is not traveling with you is aware of your travel plans. Also, consider purchasing a cellular phone if you frequently travel in isolated areas in the winter.

If you should happen to become stranded in a storm or in extremely cold conditions, stay with your vehicle. Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat. Make sure that the exhaust pipe is not blocked and that there is adequate ventilation to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. As much as possible, make your vehicle visible to rescuers by tying a red-colored cloth to the antenna or by turning on the inside dome light while running the engine. Move your arms, legs, fingers, and toes to keep blood circulating and warm.

Outside

When planning winter activities, keep abreast of the latest forecast. Be willing to change your plans if the weather is bad. When going outside in the winter, always dress for the outside conditions, even if you plan to be outside for only a few minutes. Remember, if you happen to slip and fall, you could be outside for a lot longer than you had planned. Always stay warm, and wear layered clothing to trap the body's heat. If needed, you can put on or take off clothing to help regulate your body temperature. When outside in the winter, try to avoid becoming overheated. Perspiration can rapidly cool the body to below normal levels.

Your Home

Your home is likely the safest place to be during a winter storm. However, you should prepare for the possibility that you might lose heat, phone service, electricity, and water during a storm. In preparation for this possibility, keep an ample supply of extra food and water, and make sure that you have a sufficient supply of any needed medicines. Have a battery-operated radio and flashlights ready in case they are needed, and have plenty of extra batteries available. If possible, have an alternate source of electricity or heat, but be sure that you know how to operate that alternate source safely. If you plan to use an electrical generator, make sure the generator is connected properly to your home's electrical system, and that smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are operating properly to alert you to any unanticipated dangers.

If you do lose power to your home during a winter storm, be extremely careful with those alternate sources of heat and electricity. Close off any unneeded rooms and be sure your smoke detectors are working properly. To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, operate electrical generators outside in a well-ventilated area, and be sure that the fumes are not being blown back into your home. Wear layered clothing to keep warm and be sure to eat plenty of food and drink plenty of liquids so that your body can produce the heat it needs to stay warm.

Preparedness Tip for the Day

Before winter begins, put together a winter storm survival kit for your vehicle. Take an old coat, old clothes, and an old pair of boots; put them all in a duffle bag; and throw that duffle bag in the back of your vehicle. Also, throw in a sleeping bag and/or warm

blankets. High calorie, non-perishable foods should be included, as they will help your body stay warm if you become stranded for a prolonged period.

Question of the Day:

During the January 1998 ice storm and recovery period, which of the hazards associated with the storm caused the most injuries and fatalities?

ANSWER: While it is difficult to document all the auto accidents and all the ice related injuries, the National Weather Service does keep track of fatalities that are directly attributed to storms (not including auto accidents). During the ice storm and recovery period, eight people died in Maine and New Hampshire because of the storm. Carbon monoxide poisoning was responsible for three deaths, hypothermia was responsible for three deaths, one person was killed while cleaning up fallen debris, and one person was killed from a roof collapse. In addition, a utility worker was seriously injured by a falling tree, and an estimated 300 to 400 people suffered some level of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Here is a listing of the topics that have been or will be covered in Public Information Statements during Winter Weather Awareness Week.

Monday	October 31	Winter Weather Basics.
Tuesday	November 1	WATCH, WARNING, and ADVISORY criteria for winter storms.
Wednesday	November 2	Wind Chill, Extreme Cold, Frostbite, and Hypothermia.
Thursday	November 3	High Wind, Coastal Flood, and Dense Fog threats.
Friday	November 4	Winter Weather Preparedness

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
CARIBOU MAINE

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