



## Surviving a Cold Weather Event

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News articles have shown image after image of what can happen when a crippling cold weather event hits an area. It has the power to bring life as you know it to a complete standstill.

The lower the temperatures or the longer it lasts, the more havoc it can wreak on your life. That's why it's imperative that you learn how to survive a cold weather event. One of the main differences between a hot and cold weather crisis is that in cold weather, where ice or snow is involved, the roads are sometimes impassable, trapping residents in their homes with no food or water, no power – and no way to escape.

## The Danger of Cold Weather for People Who Aren't Prepared

Preparation is the key to surviving almost any situation and that includes weather events. For those who aren't prepared in advance, you may be thinking that you'll get through it okay, but you could be gambling with your health or even your life.

You can end up losing your electricity, which means for most people, you won't have any way to heat your house. Even people who have a fireplace or two in their homes, rarely stock enough firewood to make it safely through a cold weather event.

While it might not seem like it's possible, you can get frostbite during a cold weather event in very little time – even inside your home. It takes half an hour or less to develop frostbite when the temperatures are really low.

The closer to zero the temperature gets, the more likely you are to experience this physical emergency. You can develop frostbite in fifteen minutes or less. All it takes is for temperatures in your home to fall lower than 32 degrees for this situation to happen.

Ice can even develop inside your home as evidenced by images you may have seen in news stories relating to cold weather events. You're at risk for hypothermia during a cold weather event.

This is what happens when your body's temperature drops due to being too cold. It means that your body is unable to replace the heat lost because of the cold. The longer you're in the cold temperature, the more danger you're in.

Longer exposure to cold and developing hypothermia without quick reversal from a cold to a warm environment and without medical attention can lead to death. Your home can become a haven during a cold weather event if you've prepared in advance.

Or, it can become a nightmare. When the weather drops too low outside, it can lead to frozen pipes inside the home. Making sure you have adequate insulation is important,

but under a severe cold weather snap, even the best insulation may not hold up - so before this happens, you need to know what steps you should take.

These lowered temperatures can cause pipes in your home to burst. Some people think this happens solely because ice forms in the pipes, but this isn't why pipes burst. When pipes freeze, it's because the water temperature coming into your home is stronger than what the pipe can handle.

You can get ice blockages in a pipe, but the bursting occurs because of water pressure. It only takes a few minutes for a ruptured pipe to flood an area or a room in your home. You want to keep a trickle stream of water flowing during major cold weather events.

### **Keeping Warm in a Home Where the Temperature Is Dropping**

The first thing you need to know when a cold weather event strikes is how you're going to get and stay warm. Being cold can do more than just make you miserable. When you get too cold, your thought processes slow down, you get sleepy and you're at high risk of hypothermia.

Sometimes people think they'll just bug out when their home loses heat. They think they can just go to a local hotel or get out of town. So they don't plan ahead. But this isn't always an option.

When cold weather strikes, roads and even driveways can become impassable. Then you can end up stuck without something to fall back on to keep you safe. Keep in mind that if trucks can't get around, gas stations might be out of gas, too.

Bugging out isn't always the safest option, either. Hotels can lose electricity and heat or become full because others are also seeking warmth. Rather than rely on something that you can't guarantee for your safety, it's best that you know how to keep your home warm when the temperature drops.

One of the first things you should buy is a quality indoor tent. Make sure you have a large enough tent to house all of your family members. By remaining in a tent, everyone can stay warm because the tent keeps the body heat trapped inside.

You should also have on hand sleeping bags that are known to stand up to colder weather. Many sleeping bags aren't made to withstand frigid weather. They can't help keep you warm when the temperatures dip below a certain number.

But you can buy ones that are specifically designed for extreme weather. These will usually have the temperature limit on the label. For example, the label might show that the sleeping bag can help keep you warm when the temperature is at zero or even below.

Many of these kinds of bags are more expensive, but they can help save your life and the lives of your family, so the cost is well worth it. Of course, one good way to stay warm when there's a cold weather event is to have alternative heating options that are safe to use indoors.

When it's cold and you don't have heat or electricity, your odds of surviving are questionable. One of these options would be to use an alcohol heater. You can get several hours of heat depending on the heater's alcohol storage capacity.

You can also get a propane heater that's rated for indoor use. These are the type that don't need a complicated vent set up. Or, you can buy a ventless propane fireplace. You can also find ventless kerosene heaters to use.

You can build a clay pot heater. Use small candles such as tea lights that you cover with a clay pot. The heat builds up under the pot and produces some heat. These are usually best used in small spaces, like if you've closed off the rooms and are staying in one room.

You can also use biofuel, which are small cans of fuel that can be used for warmth as well as cooking. Have a wood stove installed in your home to use in case of a cold event.

This way, not only will you be able to have heat, but you'll also have a source that you can use for cooking your meals. Some people have even been able to cook in their fireplace, but make sure you have plenty of wood on hand during the winter months in case the outage lasts.

## **Indoor and Outdoor Cooking Options to Warm You Up**

Staying warm during a cold weather event is something that you have to plan for. You need to know how you're going to take care of yourself and your family when your normal routine is interrupted.

There are plenty of ways that you can use items so that they serve a dual purpose. The cooking options that you choose can be used to prepare your food and keep you warm. Some of these options are also safe enough so that you can use them inside your home.

One of the things that you can buy is a sterno stove. This is a folding stove that can be quickly set up so that you have a way to warm your food. These gadgets are often used when you go camping because they're so lightweight and portable that they easily fit into a backpack.

It uses panels on the side that keep the heat centered. You set your food items on the surface in a pot and it cooks whatever you put in there. You can buy sterno stove kits and usually have to purchase the fuel separately.

This is known as canned heat or canned fuel. These stoves can burn for a few hours and produce enough warmth to heat a small area. They're inexpensive and can be used indoors.

If you have a fireplace, you can cook using cast iron cookware. By placing bricks in the fireplace to hold a baking rack above the flames, you can cook a variety of foods this way.

You can even grill directly on the baking rack by using tinfoil wrapped items. The only thing you need to be careful about is the kind of wood that you use. Certain woods can give off a unique flavor that might impact the quality and taste of your food.

Don't use wood that has a heavy sap concentration, such as pine. You don't want to use an outdoor grill even in a well ventilated area inside your home because of the risk of carbon monoxide.

Plus, having to ventilate, such as leaving a window, open can defeat your objective of trying to keep your home warm. You can use an outdoor grill outside to cook your foods as well as use it as an emergency a source of warmth.

You can use a grill like this to warm up bricks then wrap them in a towel. You can then place those bricks in your home, since they'll hold onto heat for many hours. Camp stoves can be used for both warming and cooking.

The fuel source can differ across the types, so while some can be safe to use indoors, others may not be. You can find ones that use propane, cannister fuel or even wood or charcoal.

To help keep you warm during the cold event, make sure that you use beverages and foods that are warm. Hot items can make you feel warmer. So consume things like soups, broth and drink hot cocoa, tea, coffee and whatever else you have that's served warm.

## **Water Considerations for Winter Weather**

Besides taking out the electricity, cold weather events can also steal your ability to have running water. If your pipes freeze, you won't have a way to get any water if you're unable to leave your house.

While in a pinch, you can melt snow to use for drinking water if there's an emergency, but cold weather doesn't always bring precipitation. So during a dry cold weather event, without access to water, you could be in danger.

Plan ahead by knowing what the weather temperatures are going to be. When you know that there could be the chance that your pipes may freeze, make sure that you leave the water in your home running.

Some people leave water running in more than one area of the house. While you can do this, there's no need to if you know where your main water line is. This line sends the water throughout the house.

So if your main water line is at the east end of your home, then turn on a water faucet somewhere at the west end. The reason that you want to do this is because the water then has to move through the pipes all way across your home.

If you turn on a faucet right by the main water line, the pipes at the opposite end can still get too cold and freeze. By leaving a faucet trickling, you can prevent having your pipes burst because you're letting the pressure out.

Don't make the mistake of leaving water slowly dripping, because this isn't enough. You need a steady stream of water running - about the size of a pencil tip. Besides taking care to protect your pipes, you'll also need water to drink.

Prepare in advance by having water stored in water bottles. Make sure you have enough for each member of the family to last for several days. This is usually a gallon per day, per person - unless there are other factors present, such as illness or pregnancy.

You'll also need to figure in enough water for use of sanitation purposes, such as hand washing and flushing the toilets. If you've prepared in advance of emergency situations, then you may have clean water on hand because you've stored some in bottles or in 55 gallon barrels.

In some events, you may have access to water, but you'll need a way to boil it. This can be problematic if you don't have any power or gas. You should never count on your gas stove working in case there's a problem with that.

Instead, you should plan on alternative boiling methods. You can use things like your camp stove or outdoor fire pit. You can also boil water using a wood stove or in your fireplace.

There are also items like solar cookers that can be used to boil water. If you don't have anything at all to use, you can boil water over a candle flame. Always have a phone charger so you can stay alert about boil water notifications in your area.

## **Tips and Tools to Help Keep You Warm in Cold Weather Conditions**

The things you can count on to keep you safe and keep your life running as normal can become non-existent when there's a cold weather condition. If the roads are impassable, you won't be able to just head down the road to go get gas.

You won't be able to travel anywhere to escape the cold without enough gas in your car, but you also won't be able to use the benefits your car can offer during such an event. This is why you need to be sure to gas up your car before the cold weather hits.

This way, you'll be able to use your car to help meet some of your needs. With gas in the tank, you can start the car and then you and your family can sit inside the vehicle and use it to get warm.

Make sure it's not in an enclosed area such as a garage when you do this because of the carbon monoxide dangers. You can also use your vehicle to charge your cell phone with a car charger.

You can find some chargers that are powerful enough to charge larger devices, too - such as a tablet. This will enable you to stay in contact with your family, keep up to date on weather conditions, or reach out for help if you need to.

If the cold weather event knocks out your power, you'll want to lower your refrigerator temperature so that the food will keep longer. Make sure that you don't open the door repeatedly, because not only can this shorten the shelf life of your food, but doing so also introduces more cold into your home.

Part of keeping warm during cold weather is found in the layering of your clothing. But there is a right way and a wrong way to do this step. You need three layers of clothing. The first layer is what goes against your skin.

The clothing that you wear against your skin needs to be made from materials that are known to keep the sweat from accumulating on your skin. Look for long sleeved clothing that touts "sweat wicking" as your best choice.

Your second layer is what's going to help keep you the warmth trapped. Think of this as your insulation. This might be something thick and puffy or something such as fleece or an insulated jacket.

The third layer of clothing is what you would wear if you were outside the home or if your home temperatures were comparable to the outdoors. This layer should consist of clothing that protects you from wind and rain.

Look for thick, waterproof outerwear that's large enough to zip up over your other layers and allows you to move freely. You can keep warm in cold weather by having just one room for everyone to stay in.

This not only helps keep body heat contained in one area, but it also prevents the cold from open rooms from dragging the temperature down even more. Insulate the windows to keep out the cool air.

You can insulate windows by using things like bubble wrap. Bubble wrap is a quick and cheap way to quickly add insulation. To apply it, you just dampen the window and put the wrap on with the bubble side against the glass.

If the wrap refuses to stick, just use a little double sided tape. You can also buy a generator so that you can run small heaters. Generators come in a variety of sizes. Some, with smaller wattage capability, can handle just survival or critical household items - while others, the more expensive ones, can handle running a furnace.

But a furnace can take 4,000 watts or more to run. So you would need to buy a large wattage generator. Another option is to use solar panels. You can buy portable solar panels that you only use during a cold weather event or when the power is out. Or, you can have ones professionally installed on your home.

Whether you're experienced in cold weather conditions or they're a rarity, everyone should have the basics available to keep their family comfortably warm and safe during an extreme temperature event.