



For Immediate Release  
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## Get Winter Ready!



“Winter officially begins December 21st. However, the National Weather Service predicts freezing temperatures this week with a low of 22 degrees on December 8th,” said Dale Lane, Shelby County Office of Preparedness (SCOP) Director. “Now is the time to prepare for winter weather. Let us help!” SCOP suggests these winter safety tips:

**Listen to the forecast:** Heed the watches and warnings. Upload free weather apps to mobile devices. Have a battery-powered NOAA radio with you.

**Dress for winter:** Wear loose, lightweight layers. It is recommended that outer garments should be water repellent and hooded. Wear socks, boots, a hat, a scarf, and mittens. Cover up!

**Caption:** Mississippi River Greenbelt Park 2015

**Prepare your home:** Prepare for outages with a safe secondary heat source (fireplace or propane heater). Cover outdoor faucets with a hard cover and insulate outdoor pipes. During freeze warnings, let indoor faucets drip and open cabinet doors below faucets. Create an emergency kit to sustain you for 7 days to include:

- Cell phone and charger
- Flashlights and batteries
- Battery powered NOAA all-hazards radio
- Non-perishable food
- Hygiene items and portable toilet
- Bottled water
- Medications
- First-aid kit
- Extra blankets
- Specialty infant and senior items
- ABC fire extinguisher
- Working smoke alarms
- Tools (multipurpose to shut off water and gas, shovel)
- Rock salt to melt ice on sidewalks and driveways



**Caption:** A.W. Willis Bridge 2016

**Prepare vehicles:** Heed the advice of emergency officials before traveling. If you must travel, go with a buddy and let others know your intended route and arrival time. Have vehicles tuned up (check fluid levels, tires, spark plugs, battery, and wipers). Keep a full tank of gas. Create an auto emergency kit to include:

- Battery booster cables
- Cell phone and charger
- Flashlights and batteries
- Wool blankets / emergency Mylar blankets
- First-aid kit
- HELP / OK sign or red signal material
- Rock salt or kitty litter for traction
- Tools (shovel, windshield scraper, tow rope, pocket knife)
- Portable toilet and hygiene items

**Pets:** Move pets indoors and livestock to a shelter. Ensure they have extra food, water, and medications. Create a “buddy system” with neighbors to check on your pets.

**Be a Buddy!** Seek out those in our community who may need extra help during winter weather. They may include seniors, those with medical problems, citizens without transportation, the indigent, and single parents.

**Learn the Winter Weather Terms:**

- **Winter Weather Advisory:** Issued ahead of dangerous winter conditions. **Criteria:** 1 to 3 inches of snow in 12 hours or ice of less than ¼ inch
- **Winter Storm Watch:** Winter weather is possible. Avoid travel. Have a “safe place” prepared. **Criteria:** 50/50 chance a warning will be issued in 12 to 24 hours
- **Winter Storm Warning:** Winter weather may pose a threat to life and property. **Criteria:** 4 or more inches of snow in 12 hours and / or ice of greater than ¼ inch
- **Wind Chill Advisory:** Exercise caution - may be life threatening. **Criteria:** -5 to -14 degrees with winds greater than 10 mph for 3+ hours
- **Wind Chill Warning:** May pose a threat to life. **Criteria:** -15 degrees or less with winds greater than 10 mph for 3 hours
- **Ice Storm Warning:** Severe weather may pose a threat to life and property. **Criteria:** 0.25 inches or more of ice in 12 hours
- **Blizzard Warning:** Conditions pose a threat to life and property. **Criteria:** visibility may be less than ¼ mile with sustained winds or gusts of 35 mph for 3 hours
- **Hypothermia:** When body temperatures drop below 95 degrees. Victims may shiver uncontrollably; have memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, and exhaustion. Seek medical help! While waiting, get the victim into dry clothing in a warm area. Cover with a warm blanket. Do not give food, alcohol or caffeine.
- **Frostbite:** Damage to body issues caused by extreme cold. May cause loss of feeling and a white appearance in extremities. Seek medical help! While waiting, move victim to a warm area and slowly warm affected areas.

For more information about winter weather preparedness, please visit: [www.staysafeshelby.us](http://www.staysafeshelby.us), [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) and [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov).

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