

## Winter Safety Guide

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All Ashland County residents know that weather conditions in North Central Ohio can change abruptly from day-to-day during the winter season. Warm, sunny days turn suddenly to cold, rainy or stormy weather. Weather forecasts often are made under difficult circumstances that are nearly impossible to predict accurately.

For this reason, it makes sense for all Emergency Management programs to help remind our citizens to be prepared for the worst. Even though some winters pass without any major snow storms, icy roads and freezing rain traditionally make winter driving and travel hazardous at times, and at other times, highly dangerous or impossible.

Knowing what to do, what to avoid, and how to prepare can save many hours of grief. At other times, it can prevent difficulties that may claim lives or cause serious injury. Here are some of the special concerns that winter weather brings nearly every year:

- Carbon monoxide poisoning, in homes or to motorists in stranded automobiles.
- Death by prolonged exposure to the cold, called "hypothermia." This occurs when the human body is unable to produce enough heat to offset frigid temperatures.
- Drowning casualties, made more dangerous by flood--swollen rivers and creeks.
- Vehicle accidents on snowy or icy highways.
- Heart attacks caused by over exertion by elderly persons or others unaccustomed to physical stress while shoveling snow or removing ice.
- Fire brought about by faulty furnaces, wood stoves, and space heaters being used improperly.

Many people die every winter in accidental deaths and injuries that could very well have been avoided. Emergency Management programs can help by promoting awareness of the problems caused by winter weather, and by outlining safety steps that can help prevent casualties.