

## ARE YOU PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY?

*Each month we suggest something you and your family can do to get ready for an emergency.*

### THIS MONTH'S CHALLENGE: Prepare for Possible Power Outage

*Winter storms bring ice, snow, cold temperatures, and sometimes power outages.*



#### BEFORE A STORM:

- **PREPARE YOUR HOME**—Get battery-powered equipment, food, heating fuel and other supplies. Make sure your disaster preparedness kit contains light sticks, flashlights, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries, and a wind-up clock.
- **Arrange for emergency heat supply** in case of power failure.
- **Generator**—Get advice from a licensed professional, such as an electrician. Do not hook up a generator directly to your home's wiring. The safest way is to connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. Connecting a cord from a generator to a point on the permanent wiring system and back feeding power to your home is an unsafe method to supply a building during a power outage. Keep your generator outside and run a cord inside.
- **Telephone system**—If it requires electricity to work (cordless phone or answering machine), plan for alternate communication, such as standard telephone handset, cellular telephone, radio, or page.
- **Electric garage door opener**—Find out where the manual release lever is located and learn how to operate it. If you use the garage as the primary means of entering your home, be sure to keep a key to your house with you, in case your garage door will not open.
- **Computer**—If you use a computer, keep files and operating systems backed up regularly. Consider buying extra batteries and a power converter if you use a laptop computer. A power converter allows most laptops (12 volts or less to be operated from the cigarette lighter of a vehicle. Turn off all computers, monitors, printers, copiers, scanners and other devices when they're not being used. Then if power goes out, the equipment will have already been shut down.
- **PREPARE YOUR CAR**—Make a winter survival kit. Include blankets or sleeping bags, flares, high energy foods (candy, nuts, and raisins), first aid kit, flashlights, extra clothing, knives, compass, candles and matches, water, maps, jumper cable, tow chain shovel, windshield scraper, sack of sand, and paper and pen to leave a note in case you evacuate your car. Keep car fuel tank above half full.

#### DURING AND AFTER THE STORM:

- **AT HOME**—**Stay in your house.** Avoid travel. Use your Emergency Supplies Kit. Include a battery operated radio and flashlights with extra batteries. (Store batteries with, but not in, your radio to avoid leakage).
- **Never use gas ovens, gas ranges, barbecues or portable or propane heaters for indoor heating**—they use oxygen and create carbon monoxide that can cause suffocation.
- **Turn off lights and electrical appliances except for refrigerator and freezer.** Unplug computers and other sensitive equipment to protect from possible surges when power is restored.
- **Dress warmly.** Wear multiple layers of protective, loose-fitting clothing, scarves, mittens and hoods. Cover your mouth and nose to protect lungs from extremely cold air.
- **Avoid overexertion.** Heart attacks are a major cause of death during and after winter storms. Shoveling snow or freeing stuck vehicles can be extremely hard work. Don't overdo it!
- **Beware of the chill factor if winds are present.**
- **Be prepared for isolation at home.** Make sure you can survive for a week or two in case a storm isolates you and makes it impossible for you to leave.
- **IF TRAPPED IN YOUR CAR**—Stay in your car for visibility and warmth. Do not try to walk out.
- **Use a candle for warmth.** Run the motor for only 10 minutes each hour for heat, with rear window open slightly for ventilation. Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.
- **Stay alert.** Do not let all occupants of the car sleep at once. Change positions frequently.

For more information, go to:

[www.slvhealth.org/cs/media/pdf/Family\\_Emergency\\_Preparedness.pdf](http://www.slvhealth.org/cs/media/pdf/Family_Emergency_Preparedness.pdf)

[www.fema.gov/hazard/winter/wi\\_before.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/hazard/winter/wi_before.shtm)

[www.utahredcross.org](http://www.utahredcross.org)