



<http://www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/stayinformed/winter>

What should Virginians do to prepare for winter weather? Here are several important safety tips:

- Get fireplaces and wood stove chimneys inspected and cleaned. These often build up creosote, which is the residue left behind by burning wood. Creosote is flammable and must be professionally removed.
- Install smoke detectors in every bedroom and one on every level of your home. Check the batteries every month. If you already have smoke detectors and did not replace the batteries when the time changed recently, replace them now.
- If you use space heaters, plug them directly into wall sockets; don't use extension cords. Keep space heaters at least three feet from other objects such as furniture, bedding and draperies. Do not leave space heaters unattended. Turn them off when you go to bed or leave the house.
- Gather emergency supplies. Start with these items: at least three days of food that does not need refrigeration or electricity to prepare, in case the power is out; at least three days of water, which is one gallon of water per day per family member; a battery-powered and/or hand-crank radio and extra batteries; flashlights and extra batteries; a first aid kit and an extra supply of medications in case you can't get out to get prescriptions refilled. Get more details and a checklist at www.ReadyVirginia.gov.
- Make an emergency plan. Decide on a meeting place to reunite if your family cannot return home. Choose an out-of-town friend or relative as a point-of-contact and be sure all family members have that person's phone number – it is often easier to call long distance than to call locally during an emergency. Remember family members with special needs and your pets when making your emergency plan. Get a free worksheet at http://www.vaemergency.gov/sites/default/files/Plan_0.pdf

- Get where you need to go before the weather gets bad. Road condition information is available 24/7 by calling 511 or visiting www.511Virginia.org. Even when roads have been treated with salt and/or sand, drivers should reduce speed and leave a safe driving distance from other vehicles on the road. Driving is most dangerous when the temperature is at or under 32° F. If the road is wet, ice is likely, especially on bridges, ramps and overpasses.