

Be ready for a winter emergency

As cold weather settles over Ontario and snow blankets many areas of the province, the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management is offering tips to make sure Ontarians are ready for winter emergencies.

A few simple steps will help families prepare their homes and cars for emergencies or winter power outages:

Every Ontario family should have an emergency survival kit that includes, food, water, a flashlight and medication needed to be safe and for at least three days after a disaster.

Inspect your existing kit to replace any out-of-date food or beverages.

Install or inspect smoke and carbon monoxide alarms -- they can be electrically powered, battery powered, or a combination of both.

Have a winter driving survival kit in your car that includes a shovel, blanket, extra clothing and footwear.

In a power outage, use flashlights or battery-operated lanterns instead of candles or hurricane lamps. If you must use a candle, place it in a secure holder, cover it with a glass chimney, and keep it away from children and pets.

Ensure you use portable generators, space heaters and barbecues safely.

If you must be outside during cold weather or a snowstorm, avoid overexertion, wear several layers of clothing, wear waterproof and insulated boots and regularly check for frostbite.

If you lose heating in your home, keep water running, even at a trickle, to help prevent pipes from freezing and bursting.

"The holiday season is the ideal time to learn how we can prepare for winter storms, cold weather and difficult driving conditions. I encourage all Ontarians to do their part to ensure their families stay safe and are ready to face winter emergencies," said Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

For more information, visit www.ontario.ca/safety