Learn more on preparation for extreme weather at the Be Ready South Dakota page.

Get insight from Yankton County Emergency Management on winter weather preparation .

The winter wonderland that makes South Dakota so beautiful during the snowy months can also be life threatening. Winter blizzards, heavy snows, ice storms, freezing rain and high winds can be a serious hazard. One of the best defenses is to stay informed. By understanding and observing storm warnings, adequate preparations can be made to lessen the impact of hazardous weather on ourselves, our property, and pets. To take full advantage of weather forecasts, know the specific meaning of the terms commonly used:

- **Freezing rain** - creates a coating of ice on roads and walkways.
- **Sleet** - is rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes roads to freeze and become slippery.
- **Winter Weather Advisory** - means cold, ice, and snow are expected.
- **Winter Storm Watch** - means severe weather such as heavy snow or ice is possible in the next day or two.
- **Blizzard Warning** - means heavy snow and strong winds will produce a blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts, and life-threatening wind chill
- **Frost/Freeze Warning** - means below freezing temperatures are expected.
- **Winter Storm Warning** - means severe winter conditions have begun or wil begin very soon.

When a winter storm warning is issued:

- Stay indoors
- If you must go outside wear several layers of lightweight clothing, those layers will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat

WINTER TRAVEL

When traveling this winter season:

- Listen to the forecast before departing and postpone travel if inclement weather is occurring or expected.
- Avoid traveling alone. Inform others of your timetable and planned routes.
- Keep your gas tank near full.
- Adjust your speed to the condition and increase following distances.
- Carry a Winter Survival Kit in your vehicle at all times!

Items that should be in your survival kit:

- Shovel and flashlight with extra batteries
- First aid kit and medications
- Non-perishable food, such as granola bars and peanuts
- Candles and matches
- Extra clothing, sleeping bags, or blankets
- Jumper cables and tire chains
- Battery-operated radio
- Cell phone with fully charged batteries
- Windshield scraper and brush
- Brightly colored cloth to tie on the antenna so the vehicle can be easily located

STRANDED DURING A WINTER STORM

If you are stranded in your vehicle during a winter storm:

- Stay with your vehicle
- Use your cellular phone to call 911. Be aware of your location and situation
- Move all your emergency supplies from the vehicle's trunk to the interior of the car as soon as you realize you may be staying for a while.
- Check your supplies to see what you have available and arrange them in order for their

use. This will help you ration them in case you are stranded for a long period of time

- Run the engine sparingly. Start with 15 minutes every hour and adjust if needed. While running the engine, keep a downwind window cracked to prevent carbon monoxide buildup.

- Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow.
- If the cold is extreme, it may be necessary to keep the engine running continuously. It may not restart if shut off.
- Never go to sleep with the engine running.
- Turn on the dome light at night while the engine is running. It may help others to locate you. Turn it off when you turn off the engine so you don't run down the car's battery.
- Put on warm clothing right away, before you start to get cold. It is easier to stay warm than it is to regain lost warmth. Loosen tight clothing so body heat can circulate. Remove metal jewelry, as it can chill you.
- Keep your feet off the floor if the heater is not on.
- Use newspapers, maps, or even the removable car mats for added insulation.
- Do mild exercises to help you stay warm.
- Watch for signs of frostbite or hypothermia.
- Eat a snack of high calorie food just before sleeping to stimulate your metabolism (heat production). If you awaken due to the cold, eat some more high energy food and add another layer of insulation such as more clothing or a blanket.
- Tie a colorful banner on the car antenna. If you need to leave the car for any distance during the storm, tie a nylon rope to the car and yourself so you will be able to find your way back to the car.