



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Emergency Services

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Emergency Services Urges Residents to Prepare for Winter Weather

FAYETTEVILLE – As part of Winter Weather Awareness Week, Nov. 30 through Dec. 6, Cumberland County Emergency Services urges residents to update their emergency plans and stock their emergency supplies kits.

“No matter if there is a severe winter storm in the forecast or a mild one, it is prudent for us all to be on the ready for whatever Mother Nature throws our way,” said Gene Booth, Cumberland County Emergency Management Coordinator. “In early 2014, North Carolina experienced four back-to-back winter storms, and some areas had inches of snow or ice, while others escaped with merely a dusting. Even with the best forecasts, North Carolina winters are often unpredictable. I don’t want Cumberland County residents to take any chances. Take the time now to update your emergency plan and supplies kit to keep your family safe.”

Booth encourages all residents to monitor changing weather conditions by listening carefully to their National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio, local radio and television stations for storm watches or warnings.

“When winter weather warnings are issued, be prepared for possible power outages or roads made impassable by snow or ice,” he said.

Booth urged residents to practice the following winter safety tips:

- Keep alternative heating sources prepared. If you have a fireplace, store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood. Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure your family knows how to use them.
- Properly vent kerosene heaters and keep any electric generators OUTSIDE and away from any open windows or doors to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Also, do not burn charcoal indoors. Carbon monoxide poisoning can result from charcoal fumes indoors.
- Keep fresh batteries on hand to use with flashlights and weather radios.
- Always keep at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food in your home.
- Wear multiple layers of thin clothing instead of a single layer of thick clothing to stay warm. You will be warmer and, as the temperature changes, you can easily remove layers to remain comfortable.
- If you must travel during a winter storm, store an emergency kit in your vehicle that includes: blankets, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries, a first aid kit, a flashlight with extra batteries, battery booster cables and flares, a tire repair kit and pump, a road map, a sack of cat litter (for tire traction), a tow rope, bottled water and non-perishable high-energy foods such as granola bars, extra clothing to keep dry, and a windshield scraper and brush.
- If driving on snow- or ice-covered roadways, reduce your speed. Driving at the regular speed limit will reduce your ability to control the car if you begin to slide. Leave plenty of room between you and other vehicles.

- If conditions worsen and you can no longer drive safely, pull off the highway. Stay calm and remain in your vehicle. Do not set out on foot unless you can see a building close by where you know you can take shelter.

Most deaths attributed to winter storms result from indirect dangers such as traffic accidents, falling trees, downed power lines, house fires and carbon monoxide poisoning resulting from improper use of space heaters, grills and stoves.

Booth reminds people that North Carolina Emergency Management has a free mobile app to help people get ready for any type of emergency. The ReadyNC mobile app provides current traffic and weather conditions, open shelters and a list of items needed in an emergency supplies kit. It is available for iPhones in the AppStore or Android devices in Google Play. Visit readync.org.

Booth also encourages citizens to sign up for CodeRED, an emergency notification service that can send severe weather warnings or other emergency alerts to county residents and businesses by telephone, cell phone, text message or e-mail. The system is capable of sending messages only to specific neighborhoods or the entire community.

The Cumberland County homepage has a link to a CodeRED registration form you can fill out online. Go to co.cumberland.nc.us and click on the CodeRED link. If you do not have internet and want to sign up for CodeRED, call 910-321-6676.