

FEMA Coordinating with States Ahead of Severe Winter Storm

FEMA shares safety guidance and urges people to prepare ahead of potential power outages, dangerous travel conditions and frigid temperatures.

On Thursday, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem provided updates on federal preparations ahead of the storm to the governors and state emergency directors in potentially affected areas. The following update is attributable to Secretary Noem:

“FEMA is actively working with states to monitor and prepare for the severe winter storm which is forecasted to produce heavy snow, dangerous freezing rain and life-threatening wind chills across most of the U.S. this weekend. In preparation, the agency activated its National Response Coordination Center and Regional Response Coordination Centers in FEMA Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 to synchronize federal readiness and interagency coordination. FEMA also embedded staff in State Emergency Operations Centers to ensure real-time coordination.

“Additionally, the agency deployed Incident Management Assistance Teams to support the states of Louisiana, Texas and the Commonwealth of Virginia and have 12 additional teams ready to deploy if requested by the states. Twenty-eight FEMA Urban Search and Rescue teams are on standby, prepared to deploy at the request of governors.

“FEMA’s strategically located distribution centers across the South and East are collectively stocked with over 7 million meals, more than 2 million liters of water, over 600,000 blankets and more than 300 generators. FEMA is also establishing staging sites in Kentucky, Louisiana and Texas with additional meals, water and generators to enable rapid movement of resources at the request of affected states.

“The time to prepare is now. The agency urges people to pay attention to local officials and take any necessary actions to keep safe as severe winter weather moves across the nation. There are several unique risks that can be addressed by following the winter safety tips below:

- **Sign up for state and local emergency alerts** from your local public safety officials. [Download the FEMA App](#) to receive real-time weather and emergency alerts for up to five different areas nationwide, send notifications to loved ones, locate emergency shelters in your area, get preparedness strategies and more.
- **Be prepared for a power outage.** Power outages can impact communications, transportation, utilities and much more. If experiencing an outage, keep freezers and refrigerators closed. Disconnect appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges. Keep generators at least 20 feet from windows, doors and garages.



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- **Never use generators indoors** or use a gas stove, kerosene or propane heater or oven to heat your home. Doing so can put you at risk for carbon monoxide poisoning.
- **Prevent house heating fires** by keeping anything that can burn at least three feet from all heat sources including fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators, portable heaters or candles. Always plug space heaters directly into an outlet and make sure its cord isn't damaged.
- **If you need to travel by car**, check your local weather and traffic reports before heading out. During a winter storm, follow guidance from local officials. If they ask you to stay off the roads, please do so. If you must drive, tell others your route and anticipated arrival time.

If your roads are not in good shape, consider postponing non-essential travel until the roads are cleared. If you must drive, increase your following distance to other vehicles from 3-4 seconds to 5-6 seconds and watch for dangerous conditions on bridges and overpasses. It takes longer to slow down on frozen roads.

Make sure you have your auto insurance provider and a towing company number in a place that's accessible.

- **Have what you need to stay safe.** Roads may be impassable for days. Make sure you have several days of water and non-perishable food for every member of your family and your pets. Have enough warm clothing and blankets for every member of your household.

If possible, get rock salt or pet-friendly products to melt walkways, sand or non-clumping kitty litter for traction, snow shovels and scrapers.

For more winter weather preparedness tips, visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).”

Contact Us

If you have any questions, please contact FEMA Office of External Affairs:

- Congressional Affairs at (202) 646-4500 or at FEMA-Congressional-Affairs@fema.dhs.gov
- Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 646-3444 or at FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov
- Tribal Affairs at (202) 646-3444 or at FEMA-Tribal@fema.dhs.gov
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