

COLESTIN RURAL FIRE DISTRICT 4-210
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WINTER EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & SURVIVAL INFORMATION for you from your local Fire District



PREPAREDNESS AT HOME:

- ▶ **Supplies to have on hand if you get snowed in:** Plan for at least one week *minimum*: Food, water, and any usual medications, top the list. This means at least one gallon of water per person per day, and ready-to-eat food. Your *Basic Home Emergency Preparedness Kit Checklist* (inside) has a list of emergency supplies and suggestions.
- ▶ **During extended power outages**, heat, water and communications may become unavailable, depending on your current sources. Are you prepared with alternatives? Having a back-up generator is strongly recommended. Other possible communications resources include a portable radio with extra batteries, CBs and other vehicle-powered devices, and cell phones with extra batteries and/or vehicle chargers.
- ▶ **If water lines or pipes freeze and break**, do you know where the shut-off valves are? Are they being kept accessible for emergencies?
- ▶ **In a wintertime emergency, can emergency response vehicles reach you?** Do you keep your driveway plowed? Have branches that could buckle under snow and fall into the roadway been trimmed?
- ▶ **Neighborhood emergency preparedness** helps to save lives, reduce severity of injuries and trauma and reduce property damage. In an emergency, the first help will probably come from a neighbor, since emergency services may not be able to help immediately. Have you shared emergency contact information with your closer neighbors? Do you have a phone tree plan in place for your immediate neighborhood? *(Continued)*

Winter Emergency Preparedness - AT HOME, continued:

- ▶ Do you keep each other apprised as to vacations out of the area, so your neighbors will know whether or not you could be snowed in and might need help, or if you will be available to help them? If you are unable to get home because of a storm, are your neighbors aware of any other family members or pets who might need assistance in your absence? Are you aware of each others' emergency resources? (See under the topics Phone Tree and Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams on our Community Wildfire Protection Plan website page at www.crfd.org for more info.)

PREPAREDNESS ON THE ROAD:

- ▶ **Basic emergency vehicle supplies** should include battery booster cables, a properly inflated spare tire, a vehicle jack, a lug wrench, tire-repair tools such as "Fix-A-Flat" (an aerosol-can sealant that injects into the hole and inflates the tire for a limited time or distance), anti-freeze, hose repair tape (such as "Gorilla" tape), 2 quarts of motor oil, a flashlight, spare batteries, and a basic hand tool kit (both Phillips and flathead screwdrivers, a couple of pliers including needle-nose, a small socket set, and a crescent wrench). You should also carry at least two 20-minute emergency road flares; reflective triangles are also useful. Other items include hand-cleaner and a first-aid kit.
- ▶ **Basic vehicle preparation before travel:** Check your vehicle's fluid levels - water/antifreeze, oil, transmission fluid, (and wiper fluid). The vehicle's battery should also be fully charged. The gas tank should be full (half-full at the very least) so that if you get stuck, you can run the engine for heat and light; engine heat also prevents the fuel line from freezing. Let other people know where you're going and the route you're taking; this can be very important if you do become lost or stranded. Fully charge your cell phone before leaving, and if possible, carry a phone charger that can plug into the vehicle's cigarette lighter, as well as extra fully-charged phone batteries.
- ▶ **Driving in winter weather:** Are you prepared for ice or snow? You should have tire chains that fit, sand or non-clumping kitty litter for traction, a small shovel, a windshield ice scraper, a snow brush, rags and hand-towels. Miscellaneous items include extra wiper fluid, a window squeegee, a plastic tarp or waterproof outer clothing for installing chains or in case you get stuck; a change of dry, warm clothing if necessary (especially gloves and waterproof boots); and an emergency kit. Also, ODOT provides winter driving tips online at www.oregon.gov/odot.

- ▶ **Do not leave clothes dryer on if leaving home.** Potential overheating is a fire hazard and should be avoided.
- ▶ **Smoke detectors should be installed** in your home in appropriate locations, **and all batteries should be replaced** with new ones at least once a year, and tested periodically to ensure that your smoke alarms are all working properly. Too many homes and lives have been lost not because smoke detectors weren't in use, but because they weren't maintained, and failed to warn the occupants soon enough.
- ▶ **Your kitchen should have a fire extinguisher**, properly mounted. It should be maintained at 'full,' and be tested at least once a year.
- ▶ **In case of a fire, an escape plan for the entire family or all occupants should be in place and reviewed with everyone ahead of time.** Your plan should include a pre-agreed meeting place outside the structure and arrangements for assisting those who may need help evacuating, including any pets. Assign individuals (and alternate back-ups) to any specific tasks, and discuss parameters for completing these safely. Once outside, stay outside. DO NOT, under any circumstances, re-enter a burning structure.

"House fires occur more frequently in the winter due to lack of proper safety precautions when using alternate heating sources (unattended fires, disposal of ashes too soon, improperly placed space heaters, etc.). Fire during winter storms presents a great danger because water supplies may freeze and it may be difficult for firefighting equipment to get to the fire."

--from the publication *Winter Storm: Talking About Disaster*, produced by the National Disaster Education Coalition: American Red Cross, FEMA, IAEM, IBHS, NFPA, NWS, USDA/CSREES, AND USGS.

For more winter emergency preparedness information, see www.crfd.org. The American Red Cross website (at www.redcross.org/services/disaster) is also an excellent resource. See the Disaster Services sections on Disaster Safety, Prepare for Disasters, Winter Storm, Prepare at Home, and Emergency Preparedness Kits, where you can plan your own customized emergency kit. **If you have any questions or concerns, call us at (541) 488-1768.**

--The Colestin Rural Fire District

Your Basic Home Emergency Preparedness Kit CHECKLIST:

The six essential categories for preparation are: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies, and special items for medical conditions. Use a portable storage container(s) for the items in your kit:

- Water: A person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers, and ill people will need more. Store one gallon of water per person per day (two quarts for drinking, two for food preparation/personal sanitation). Keep at least a week's supply of water per person; store water in non-breakable containers (cleaned plastic is best). A water purification kit or tablets may also be useful.
- Food: Store at least a week's supply of ready-to-eat food. Stock your food supply with canned meals, meats, fruits, and vegetables: crackers, peanut butter, canned foods (stews, vegetables), dried fruit, dried soups, evaporated canned or powdered milk and cereal, high-energy foods (energy bars, granola bars), canned juices, and other freeze-dried or foil-pouch food products and other non-perishable items; a portable camping cooking unit and fuel (sterno).
- Unique family needs, such as daily prescription or other OTC medications, infant formulas or diapers; include infant, elder, and special needs supplies.
- Extra pet food and water for at least one week, and any regularly given pet medications that may be needed. A leash for each dog, and pet carriers for each animal, are also advisable.
- a back-up generator for power outages
- Battery-powered portable radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries (and bulbs); candles & matches; a lighter
- Prepare a First Aid Kit (include antibiotic ointment, small bandages and an Ace bandage).
- Sleeping bags, blankets, plastic tarps, and warm jackets and other waterproof or weather-resistant outerwear, gloves, boots, and hat. Extra warm clothing and a seasonal change of clothing for everyone.
- Dust mask or cotton T-shirt to help filter air, and a whistle to signal for help
- plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place (instead of evacuation)
- wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- A manual can opener for canned foods, a pocket knife, cutlery; disposable eating utensils, plates, bowls, cups, etc.;
- Moist towelettes or handi-wipes, and garbage bags and plastic ties for sanitation; other personal toiletry and hygiene items (toothbrush, comb, etc.); a bucket with a lid to use as a toilet, extra TP, and a shovel.
- in a (separate) small portable container, assemble copies of important documents, records, and insurance policies, and any other essential information in the event of evacuation; you may wish to include cash, family documents and photos, and any other necessary business and personal information. Also include a spare set of house and vehicle keys.
- Arrange an out-of-area phone contact person (someone who will not likely be affected by an emergency or situation affecting you).
- Give every family or household member specific safety tasks to do.
- Identify safe places in your home and on your property.
- Identify a family or group meeting place away from home.
- Enroll a family/household member in a first-aid or first responder course; learn how to recognize and treat exposure to the cold, frostbite, and hypothermia.
- Know how to shut off water valves, gas lines, or other energy-source lines in the event of breakage or leaking.
- Learn about potential hazards and assets within your community. Talk with your nearby neighbors and share information - phone or other contact numbers, when you/they are traveling or home, what resources you each can provide, what you might need in an emergency from your neighbors, or they from you, anyone with special needs who may need help, animal care assistance, etc. Knowing these things ahead of time could save lives, and can make all of our lives better here in the Colestin valley.

GENERAL WINTER HOME SAFETY REMINDERS:

- ▶ **Clean your stove pipes and chimneys**, if you haven't yet done it for this wood-burning season. Creosote build-up is an accident waiting to happen (we have a number of documented cases within our district). Flues and chimneys should be cleaned a minimum of once a year, and twice if they're used often. Creosote should be scraped off of the interior sidewalls with a wire brush, and the resulting loosened ash vacuumed up entirely, including from the smoke shelf or other interior surfaces, since concentrated loose creosote increases the fire risk.
- ▶ **All wood-burning appliances should be inspected prior to use**, preferably by a licensed chimney sweep, for operational integrity (condition of metal, bricks, mortar, masonry, and any damage, cracking, etc.) and repaired if necessary.
- ▶ **Do not leave wood stoves unattended** if the drafts are open. In addition to possible over-firing, burning wood or wood fragments can fall out, and sparks can escape, igniting anything flammable nearby.
- ▶ **Use ONLY metal buckets for storing ashes.** DO NOT store recent, potentially hot ashes on wood or other flammable surfaces. Remove ashes only to non-flammable, non-windy locations away from all structures, and only after they are completely cold (no hot coals).
- ▶ **Visit our website page Stoves & Flue Fires** for more detailed information; also visit the National Fire Protection Association at www.nfpa.org.

"The failure to properly clean - including chimneys, grease and food build-up in ovens, and dryer lint traps - was the single biggest cause of structure fires in Oregon for each of the past five years."

--The Oregon State Fire Marshall's Annual Report, 2008

- ▶ **If you need to unthaw frozen pipes**, remove any insulation and wrap pipes in rags; completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they were most exposed to the cold. A hand-held hair dryer, used with caution to prevent overheating, works well. (Do not use a blow torch.) To prevent freezing, insulate all pipes exposed to cold; on cold nights, let faucets drip a little.

- ▶ **Before winter travel, be aware of current conditions.** Check current weather and road condition reports including any closures, restrictions or chain requirements. This is particularly important if traveling over the 4,310-foot-high Siskiyou summit; the southbound change in elevation from the Rogue valley floor is about 2,300 feet, and travel conditions can be very different nearer to the summit. And according to ODOT, the Siskiyou Pass is also the only mountain pass in Oregon where all-weather or studded tires cannot be substituted for chains; when chains are required on the Siskiyou, everyone has to chain up except vehicles equipped with 4-wheel-drive. TripCheck.com now has several road cameras located on the pass, as well as two at the Hilt/I-5 interchange. **To check by phone:** In Oregon, dial 511 (or if your phone company doesn't support 5-1-1 service, then dial toll-free 800-977-ODOT, or 800-977-6368. Outside of Oregon, dial 1-503-588-2941. In California, dial 1-800-427-ROAD. Outside of California, dial 1-916-445-7623. **To check online**, visit www.wrh.noaa.gov/mfr/roads/index.php. Cell phone and PDA users can also go to www.TripCheck.com/mobile, which has an easy-to-use menu with access to traffic alerts, incident information, road conditions and traveler services.
- ▶ **Are you prepared for road closures or delays?** Keeping a winter vehicle survival kit and knowing a few tips can make a big difference. At the top of the Emergency Supplies list is food that won't spoil (energy bars, beef jerky, etc.); at least one energy bar per person per day, at the very minimum. Drinking water is also crucial to keep everyone hydrated, especially children, the elderly, and any pets. Any regularly needed medications should be on board also. Other items include one or two sleeping bags or blankets, or to save space, an emergency reflective blanket; matches or a lighter to light flares or start a fire; extra warm dry clothing; plastic garbage bags and handi-wipes for sanitation, plastic sealable jars or small bucket for use as a toilet, and any other personal items that may be needed. If you travel with a baby, pack extra food, warm clothes, blankets, diapers, toys and games, and always properly use your child safety seat.
- ▶ **If you get stuck or stranded during a storm**, stay with your vehicle; remain inside and keep as dry and warm as possible. Display a trouble sign that can be seen (such as a red flag on the antenna). Shift positions periodically for circulation; avoid sleep if alone. Run the engine for about 10 minutes every hour (or 5 minutes every half-hour), using the heater while the engine is running to keep warm, with a downwind window slightly open to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.