



LET'S GET READY FOR WINTER

Edition 05 | HEALTH EQUITY BEAT
A HEALTH EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Each winter, we experience harsh storms across Erie County. Each part of the county is affected differently. Winter storms can be dangerous and cause emergencies with your health and inside your home. There are steps you can take now to keep you and your loved ones safe when a storm happens.

● WHY SHOULD WE PREPARE?

Winter weather can be extremely cold, windy and dangerous at times. You may not be able to drive your car or access public transportation. You might need to stay inside for a few days. You may lose power, making food storage and staying warm difficult. If you lose power, your landline phone will not work and you will not be able to charge mobile devices. You might run out of food, water, and heat quickly if you do not prepare before a storm. Making sure you have everything you need will help you survive and stay comfortable. It is important to have an **action plan for emergencies**. This will help make sure your loved ones, especially elders and those living with disabilities, are safe too.

CREATE A CIRCLE OF CARE

People in a circle of care offer each other practical help when things get tough. Together, your resources and knowledge will help the whole group stay strong during a winter storm. Your circle can include family, friends, neighbors, faith leaders, safe people, handy people, medical and mental health experts, and more.

In your circle, get together to find out what information and supplies you might be able to share. Make a **call tree** and a plan for what to do if roads are unsafe or power goes out. Talk about what you might need if you are stuck inside for a few days. Know who needs help shoveling, who needs oxygen and medicine, who needs to get to work, and who needs diapers and formula.

Learn how to make a call tree & an emergency action plan inside.



Erie County
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www.erie.gov/health-equity

IMPORTANT TERMS



These terms are used on local news and Erie County social media during winter storms.

TRAVEL ADVISORY

Travel is not safe. Travel only if it is necessary or an emergency. Prepare to stay home.

TRAVEL BAN

A temporary law banning driving because roads are too dangerous. This gives snow removal workers space to clear the roads. Rules about parking may also change.

ESSENTIAL WORKER

A person who reports to work, even during a travel ban. These workers have identification that shows they can travel during a ban.

WINTER STORM ADVISORY

Winter weather is expected soon.

WINTER STORM WATCH

Winter weather conditions may become dangerous. Prepare for snow, sleet or ice buildup.

WINTER STORM WARNING

Heavy snow, sleet or ice buildup is expected to cause dangerous travel conditions.

BLIZZARD WARNING

Large amounts of blowing snow and fast winds will last many hours. Prepare to stay home.

Road closure info: erie.gov/dpw

Weather info: weather.gov/buf



OVEREXERTION Extra strain on your heart due to physical activity during cold weather may cause a heart attack. Signs include chest pain, shortness of breath, and discomfort in arm or shoulder. Call 911 right away if you experience these symptoms.

Learn more: bit.ly/signsofheartattack



HYPOTHERMIA When you are cold for a long time, your body's core temperature can drop below normal. Symptoms include uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, slow memory, stumbling, and drowsiness. This can cause permanent damage or death. If someone is experiencing these symptoms, warm them slowly to avoid shock and call 911 right away.



FROSTBITE A severe reaction to cold temperatures that can permanently damage your skin, muscle, and nerve tissue. Symptoms include loss of feeling and pale fingers, ears, and toes. Soak limbs in warm water or cover with a warm wash cloth until feeling comes back.

More about hypothermia & frostbite: bit.ly/CDCwintersafety

BEFORE WINTER



- Make sure you have a snow shovel or snow removal equipment and salt.
- Know how to shut off utilities in your home: water, gas and electricity.
- Know where toxic chemicals are in your home and keep them away from children.
- Check that your fireplace is in safe working order and store wood to use for heating.
- Store a working fire extinguisher in a place that is easy to retrieve.
- Check that your carbon monoxide detector is functioning and not out of date.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning can become a risk from stuck dryer vents and snow covered furnace vents. Learn where yours are and keep them clear all year.

STAY WARM



If the power goes out, you may lose heat.

- Wear layers of clothing and keep your head, hands, and feet covered.
- Keep all the heat in one room or area of your home. Cover windows, doors & cracks with blankets or plastic wrap to insulate.
- Light candles. Keep them away from children and do not burn while sleeping.
- If you have a gas stove, get cooking! Cook foods that will spoil first. Do not use your stove to heat your home.
- Get moving! If your physical ability is limited, pile on blankets and layers.
- Drink hot beverages. Put a hot water bottle under your blankets.

BUILD A BLIZZARD KIT

A Blizzard Kit is a set of supplies useful in a cold weather emergency where you are stuck inside your home or car for a period of time. A good rule is to have enough supplies for each person and animal in your home to last three days or more.

BLIZZARD KIT FOR HOME

Your home Blizzard Kit can be a box you keep tucked away or a list of items you know you always have available in your home.

- Water: one gallon per person per day
- Canned & dry food: three day supply per person
- Baby formula
- Pet Food
- Can opener
- Warm clothing
- Blankets
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- First Aid kit
- Important medication
- Adjustable wrench and pliers
- Pocket knife
- Flashlight with extra batteries and/or lanterns and fuel
- Matches/lighter
- Propane stove or canned heat ethanol gel also called "Sterno"
- Snow shovel
- Portable or solar phone charger
- Personal protective equipment (masks, sanitizer, etc)
- Hand warmers

Bonus buy:

Plastic sheeting & tape to insulate windows
Home generator

Visit www.ready.gov/kit for prepping tips

BLIZZARD KIT FOR CAR

Your car Blizzard Kit can be stashed in the trunk or under a seat so long as it is accessible when stuck inside your vehicle.

- Full tank of gas
- Bottles of water
- Snacks
- Warm clothing
- Blankets
- First Aid kit
- Important medication
- Local map
- Pocket knife
- Flashlight & batteries
- Shovel
- Salt/sand/cat litter
- Snow brush
- Ice scraper
- Bright colored cloth or flares to use as a distress signal
- Window breaker
- Jumper cables
- Tow rope
- Portable phone charger

Bonus buy:

Snow chains or snow tires



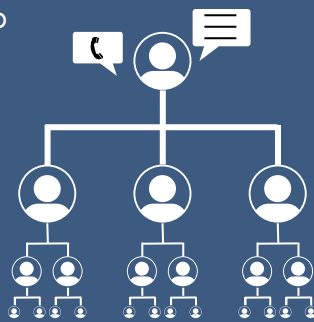
PREP ON A BUDGET



To find items for free, check out your neighborhood's Buy Nothing group on Facebook or Free Cycle listservs. These are great resources for finding household items, tools and more. More information here: buynothingproject.org and freecycle.org

MAKE A CALL TREE

Call trees have been used to share information for generations. Each person is responsible for contacting the people directly below them and reporting back if someone is not answering or needs help. Checking in on neighbors can happen quickly with a call tree. Your call tree may prevent neighbors from feeling isolated or lonely, too. Remember to make a plan for how to respond to needs and emergencies that come up during check-ins and what to do if phones are not working. Landline phones may not work when your power is out.



STAY SAFE

- Take breaks when shoveling & be careful when pushing stuck cars to avoid overexertion.
- A battery-powered AM/FM radio will still receive updates if the power goes out.
- Protect water pipes from freezing by keeping the water dripping from the faucet a little bit.
- If you take medication and live alone, make sure your pharmacist, doctor, and a person you trust know to get medications to you.
- If you use powered medical equipment, find out about back up power sources. Alert the electric company to prioritize your needs.
- If you have a disability that impacts speech, keep printed information explaining needs.



READYERIE PREPAREDNESS APP

The ReadyErie preparedness app is available for Erie County residents to make emergency plans and receive critical information and alerts from Erie County during emergencies. Answer 5 basic questions and receive your personalized Emergency Preparedness Plan.

- Get instant access to evacuation maps and safe routes
- Find the nearest emergency shelter & special services in your area
- Receive alerts from ReadyErie
- Create a family emergency plan & access detailed go-kit supply lists
- Broadcast your "I am safe" or "I need help" status with one single tap

More information here: www.erie.gov/readyerie



WINTER SAFETY RESOURCES



← More info online

EMERGENCY SHELTER

Erie County Temporary Assistance can help you find a safe temporary shelter, hotel or motel.

Mon-Fri 9am-5pm (716) 858-8000

After 5pm or weekends Dial 2-1-1

211wny.org or 1-800-696-9211

CODE BLUE

When temperature is below 32°, warming locations open up across Erie County.

211wny.org Dial 2-1-1

Text "codebluebuffalo" or "codebluesouthernerie" to 898211

STUCK ON THE ROAD?

CALL 911 IF YOU ARE TRAPPED

Thruway Emergency 1-(800) 842-2233

Roadside Assistance

FREE SAFETY TRAINING

First Aid For Free: First Aid, CPR & AED Training
firstaidforfree.com

Erie County Stop the Bleed Training (716) 858-7109

Erie County Opioid Overdose Recognition & Naloxone (Narcan) Use Trainings (716) 858-8701

Upstate New York Poison Prevention Training
upstate.edu/poison/community/train

HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE

FUNDS & EQUIPMENT TO HEAT YOUR HOME

Erie County HEAP office (716) 858-7644

Erie County Senior Services (716) 685-6252

Weatherization Assistance Program



THIS IS A PUBLICATION OF THE

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This publication is available in 5 languages on our website and in print.

The Erie County Office of Health Equity's vision is for everyone in Erie County to achieve maximum health and wellness. The Office of Health Equity is located within the Erie County Department of Health.

Want to learn more?

Visit www.erie.gov/health-equity

Email us at HealthEquity@erie.gov



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