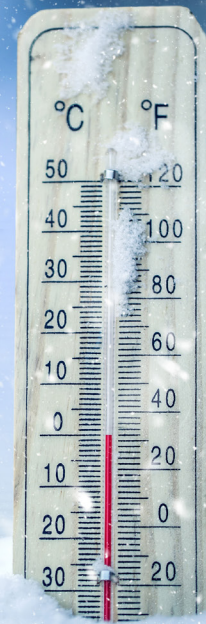


# Cold Weather Safety Tips

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Although mild weather prevails in many areas during most of the winter, temperatures can still dip below freezing. Planning in advance is the best way to handle extremely cold weather and winter storms. When freezing temperatures threaten in and around your area, Stewart Title offers the following tips for protecting yourself and your property.

## Winter Weather Tips for the Home

- ▶ A good emergency supply list to keep around the house:
  - ❑ Batteries (different sizes for flashlights, radios, etc.)
  - ❑ Blankets
  - ❑ Matches and/or lighters
  - ❑ First aid kit
  - ❑ Flashlight
  - ❑ Radio (i.e. NOAA Weather Radio)
  - ❑ Battery-powered clock or watch
  - ❑ Non-electric can opener
  - ❑ Wear several layers of clothes to keep warm.
  - ❑ Other special items you may need, such as medication, baby food, pet food, etc.
  - ❑ Firewood (if you have a fireplace)
  - ❑ Kerosene (for a kerosene heater)
- ▶ Stock up at the grocery store ahead of time, so you don't get caught in the mad dash that happens right before a winter storm. Have plenty of non-perishable food items on hand such as canned foods, dried fruits and cereal. If the power goes out, you'll be unable to cook a warm meal unless you have a gas stove.
- ▶ Check space heaters for sufficient ventilation and wire condition.
- ▶ Never place space heaters close to flammable objects, such as drapes or bedding.
- ▶ Ensure the fireplace flues are working properly.
- ▶ Keep fire extinguishers on hand and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk when people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.
- ▶ Do not use charcoal or gas grills indoors. Never use a gas oven for heat – they produce deadly carbon monoxide fumes.
- ▶ Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected every year.
- ▶ Turn off the water to outdoor faucets and drain the pipes. Frozen pipes inside your home can begin with a frozen faucet outside.
- ▶ Drip the inside faucets that are located furthest from where the water source enters the house and at locations where water pipes are located in exterior walls.

## Winter Weather Tips for the Yard

- ▶ Bring potted plants inside. Freezing temperatures can damage roots and even kill plants and flowers.
- ▶ Cover outdoor plants with row cover, otherwise known as frost cloth. Make sure to cover them all the way down to the ground and around pots. Weigh down the cover with stones to make sure it stays put.
- ▶ Remove water hoses from outside connections. Cover and insulate exterior water faucets.
- ▶ If you have a swimming pool in your backyard and expect freezing weather, leave your pump turned on. The water is much less likely to freeze if it is consistently moving. As water freezes, there is expansion. This expansion can destroy your pump, filter and pipes. Alternatively, you can drain your pool.
- ▶ During icy or snowy days, use rock salt or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways. Walk carefully!

## Winter Weather Tips for Pets

- ▶ Keep pets inside. Make sure your pet has a bed away from drafts and doors and give them a blanket to snuggle with.
- ▶ Keep outdoor walks short. When walking them, do so on the grass, not the cold sidewalk.
- ▶ Dogs can easily lose their scent in ice or snow – walk them on a leash so they don't go missing.
- ▶ Wipe snow, sleet and ice off of your dog's legs and stomach so they do not ingest salt or antifreeze while licking themselves.
- ▶ Keep your dog's coat long for insulation.

## Winter Weather Tips for Travel

- ▶ Dress in layered clothing and wear some kind of head cover when leaving your home.
- ▶ Change wet clothing frequently to prevent loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses all of its insulating value and transmits heat rapidly.
- ▶ On mornings when there is ice and snowfall, check your local news channels prior to leaving for work or school. The local stations usually receive lists of closings and delays due to winter weather. You can also check their mobile apps or social media pages for updates.
- ▶ Winterize your car – hire a mechanic if needed:
  - ❑ Check the antifreeze.
  - ❑ Check the tire pressure.
  - ❑ Check for brake wear and fluid levels.
  - ❑ Inspect all the belts and hoses.
  - ❑ Inspect the windshield wipers and wiper fluid.
  - ❑ Make sure you've had an oil change recently.
  - ❑ Make sure the battery is fully charged.
- ▶ Rap on the hood of your car before starting it up because cats like to sleep in engines and wheel wells.
- ▶ Create an emergency kit to keep in your car at all times. A good emergency supply kit should at least contain the following items:
  - ❑ Emergency flares
  - ❑ Extra oil
  - ❑ Warm blankets
  - ❑ Antifreeze
  - ❑ First aid kit
  - ❑ Some food and water

### RELATED WEBSITES

Find additional information on how to prepare for a winter storm and learn about available resources by visiting the following websites:

**Federal Emergency Management Agency**  
fema.gov

**National Weather Service**  
weather.gov

**American Red Cross**  
redcross.org

**The Weather Channel**  
weather.com

[stewart.com/austin](http://stewart.com/austin)