

15 Ways to stay safe when 'Ole Man Winter' hits

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 01/19/2019

Baltimore, MD, Jan. 18, 2019 — Winter weather poses unique challenges to people faced with bitter cold, snow and ice. The American Red Cross has steps you should take to stay safe if you are in the path of winter storms.

"Another set of winter storms is headed to this region and we have safety tips everyone can follow to stay safe," said American Red Cross Greater Chesapeake Region CEO Scott R. Salemme. "Whether trying to keep your home warm or having to be outside in the cold, you can follow these steps to get through the storm."

HEAT YOUR HOME SAFELY

It's that time of year when many people resort to space heaters and other sources to keep their homes warm. Home heating is the second leading cause of fires in this country. To reduce the risk of heating related fires, the Red Cross recommends these steps (More home fire safety information available [here](#)):

1. All heaters need space. Keep children, pets and things that can burn (paper, matches, bedding, furniture, clothing, carpets, and rugs) at least three feet away from heating equipment.
2. If you must use a space heater, place it on a level, hard and nonflammable surface (such as ceramic tile floor), not on rugs, carpets or near bedding or drapes. Plug power cords directly into outlets - never into an extension cord.
3. Never leave a fire in the fireplace unattended, and use a glass or metal fire screen to keep fire and embers in the fireplace.
4. Never use a cooking range or oven to heat your home.
5. Turn off portable space heaters every time you leave the room or go to sleep.

STAY SAFE DURING WINTER WEATHER

1. Wear layers of clothing, a hat, mittens and waterproof, insulated boots.
2. Be careful when tackling strenuous tasks like shoveling snow in cold temperatures.
3. Check on your neighbors, especially elderly people living alone, people with disabilities and children.
4. Bring pets indoors. If they can't come inside, make sure they have enough shelter to keep them warm and that they can get to unfrozen water.
5. Watch for hypothermia and frostbite. Hypothermia symptoms include confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and severe shivering. Frostbite symptoms include numbness, flushed gray, white, blue or yellow skin discoloration, numbness, or waxy feeling skin.

WINTER TRAVEL SAFETY

Stay off the road if possible during severe weather. If you must drive in winter weather, follow these tips:

1. Make sure everyone has their seat belts on and give your full attention to the road.
2. Don't follow other vehicles too closely. Sudden stops are difficult on snowy roadways.
3. Don't use cruise control when driving in winter weather.
4. Don't pass snow plows.
5. Ramps, bridges and overpasses freeze before roadways.

DOWNLOAD APPS -- People can download the Red Cross Emergency App for instant access to weather alerts for their area and where loved ones live. Expert medical guidance and a hospital locator are included in the First Aid App in case travelers encounter any mishaps. Both apps are available to download for free in app stores or at [redcross.org/apps](https://www.redcross.org/apps)

On average, the American Red Cross of the Greater Chesapeake Region provides help to Maryland, Delaware and Virginia families four times each day. After disasters, the Red Cross provides services including: emergency shelter, food, clothing and counseling, thanks to the generosity of financial donors and the commitment of volunteers.

The Red Cross responds to nearly 64,000 disasters every year, most of which are home fires. Each day the Red Cross also provides lifesaving blood to area hospitals, teaches lifesaving skills, and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its humanitarian mission. For more information or to donate, please visit [RedCross.org/gcr](https://www.RedCross.org/gcr) or follow us on Twitter @RedCrossGCR or on Facebook @RCChesapeake.

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