

# Severe Weather Winter



## Be Weather Aware!

Freezing rain, ice pellets, snowsqualls, white-outs, heavy snow and high winds can cause extensive delays and inconvenience your daily schedule, but they can also bring with them damage, power outages and even life-threatening conditions.

Take the time to know what to watch for, and what to do if there is a weather watch or warning issued for where you live or where you are traveling to.

### Tips on Preparing for Severe Weather:

1. **Don't wait for a storm to hit.** Begin preparing now and you'll be able to react quickly when a storm is forecast.
2. **Assemble 72 Hour Preparedness Kit.** Have it stocked and ready, and in a place where you can easily access it.
3. **Pay close attention to the weather.** Some types of nasty winter weather can develop very quickly with little warning, so be sure to regularly check weather forecasts on media outlets or the Internet or visit [www.weatheroffice.com](http://www.weatheroffice.com).
4. **Travel safely.** Give your car a winter tune-up in mid autumn and have your snow tires installed early in fall. Assemble a car emergency kit including basic items like high-energy snacks, a flashlight or road hazard light, new batteries, a blanket, and warm gel packs.
5. **Work and play safe.** Winter storms and high wind chills can be hazardous to you, your employees, your children and your pets. Be aware of conditions worsening and always dress to suit the weather – wear a hat and thin layers of loose clothing with water-repellent and wind-resistant outer layers. Watch carefully for symptoms signalling hypothermia: shivering, confusion and loss of muscle control. Frostbite can occur in minutes; watch for numbness or whiteness in ears, nose, fingers and toes.
6. **Respect advisories and evacuation orders.** If local emergency responders are advising you to stay inside and not travel – do that. Take cover inside and stay there until the storm has subsided and the danger has passed. Keep your vehicles off the roadways to allow emergency responders and snow removal crews better access.
7. **Remember that after-storm conditions can pose hazards too.** Downed tree limbs and power lines can be dangerous. Be extremely cautious if you tackle tree removal yourself. Better yet, leave it to professionals! Even falling ice and snow can be deadly.

## Know the risks

Make a plan

Prepare a kit

Winter weather is no joke. Bitter cold and winter storms kill more than 100 people in Canada every year. That's more than the number of Canadians killed by tornadoes, thunderstorms, lightning, floods and hurricanes combined.

Preparation you can't live without.



### *Winter travel calls for extra care*

*even under normal weather conditions.*

The **best safety precaution** to take during severe winter weather conditions is to avoid traveling at all. However, if you must travel, be aware and be prepared. Listen to Environment Canada's weather forecasts and the various watch and warnings bulletins before you decide whether it is safe to travel. Also, make sure to check the forecast to see what is happening - both en route and at your planned destination when you are scheduled to arrive.

### **Winter Watches and Warnings**

A **Watch** is issued by Environment Canada as a heads up that severe and possibly dangerous weather conditions are expected soon. A Winter Storm Watch is usually issued 12 to 48 hours in advance of the approaching bad weather. You should watch the skies and monitor local radio/television broadcasts or the Environment Canada weather Website for new developments. Environment Canada will either end the Winter Storm Watch or upgrade it to a Winter Weather Warning, depending on the conditions.

A **Warning** is issued by Environment Canada when a combination of hazardous winter conditions are occurring or expected to develop no more than 12 to 14 hours in advance. You should continue to watch the skies and monitor local radio/television broadcasts or the Environment Canada weather Website for new developments.

### **Winter Storm**

A **Watch** is issued when conditions are favourable for the development of severe winter weather such as: a blizzard, heavy snowfall, a winter storm, freezing rain, or possible future weather warning.

A **Warning** is issued where there is a combination of weather elements that produce the weather-related hazard.

### **Snow Squall**

A **Warning** is issued when there is a combination of heavy snowfalls, strong winds and reduced visibilities to the lee of the Great Lakes or other large lakes.

### **Blizzard**

A **Warning** is issued when certain combinations of cold temperatures, strong winds and reduced visibility occur simultaneously for a specific length of time.

### **Wind Chill**

A **Warning** is issued when wind combined with very cold temperatures create outdoor conditions hazardous to human activity.

***Make your plans accordingly — know what to do before you need to do it! Check Environment Canada's site for their Tips on Preparing for Summer Severe Weather at [www.ec.gc.ca](http://www.ec.gc.ca)***

***Check Environment Canada's Weatheroffice site for forecasts, radar, warnings, and links to other weather related information at [www.weatheroffice.com](http://www.weatheroffice.com)***

**For more tips on emergency preparedness:**

[www.london.ca/emergency](http://www.london.ca/emergency)   [www.ontario.ca/emo](http://www.ontario.ca/emo)   [www.GetPrepared.ca](http://www.GetPrepared.ca)

