

Important Winter Safety Tips

by Farmers' Almanac Staff

Sometimes winter conditions can strike, whether it's winter or not. Extreme cold, dangerous wind chills, and power outages are some of the hazards when temperatures drop. Be sure you check out these important winter preparedness safety tips:

1. Before severe winter weather arrives: Know safe routes from home, work, and school to high ground.
2. Know how to contact other household members through a common, out-of-state contact in the event you have to evacuate and become separated.
3. Know how to turn off gas, electric power, and water before evacuating.
4. Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors, or employees.
5. Keep plywood, plastic sheeting, lumber, sandbags, and hand tools on hand and accessible.
6. Winterize your house, barn, shed, or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock, pets, or equipment.
7. Install storm shutters, doors, and windows; clear rain gutters; repair roof leaks; and check the structural ability of the roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow—or water, if drains on flat roofs do not work.
8. Store drinking water, first-aid kit, canned/no-cook food, manual can opener, radio, flashlight and extra batteries where you can get them easily, even in the dark.
9. Keep cars and other vehicles fueled and in good repair, with a winter emergency kit in each.
10. Get a NOAA weather radio to monitor severe weather.

Do you know your weather warning terminology?

- **WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY:** Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous, especially to motorists.
- **WINTER STORM WATCH:** Be alert, a storm is likely.
- **WINTER STORM WARNINGS:** Take immediate action, the storm is in or entering the area.
- **BLIZZARD WARNING:** Snow and strong winds combined will produce blinding snow, near zero-visibility, deep drifts, and life-threatening wind chill—seek refuge immediately.
- **FROST/FREEZE WARNING:** Below freezing temperatures are expected and may cause damage to plants, crops, or fruit trees.
- **FLASH FLOOD OR FLOOD WATCH:** Be alert to signs of flash flooding and be ready to evacuate on a moment's notice.
- **FLASH FLOOD WARNING** A flash flood is imminent. Act quickly to save yourself. You may have only seconds.
- **FLOOD WARNING:** Flooding has been reported or is imminent take necessary precautions at once.
- **Wind Chill**
According to our Weather Glossary, the **Wind Chill Index** is defined as “the cooling effect

of any combination of temperature and wind.” Originally developed in 1939 by Paul A. Sipel, an Antarctic explorer and an expert on cold climate issues, wind chill values have been recalculated in recent years to better conform to actually observed outdoor conditions.

Below is a table of wind chill values. The red area indicates where frostbite will occur within 15 minutes.

Temperature (°F)

	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	-25
5 mph	25	19	13	7	1	-5	-11	-16	-22	-28	-34	-40
10 mph	51	15	9	3	-4	-10	-16	-22	-28	-35	-41	-47
15 mph	19	13	6	0	-7	-13	-19	-26	-32	-39	-45	-51
20 mph	17	11	4	-2	-9	-15	-22	-29	-35	-42	-48	-55
25 mph	16	9	3	-4	-11	-17	-24	-31	-37	-44	-51	-58
30 mph	15	8	1	-5	-12	-19	-26	-33	-39	-46	-53	-60
35 mph	14	7	0	-7	-14	-21	-27	-34	-41	-48	-55	-62
40 mph	13	6	-1	-8	-15	-22	-29	-36	-43	-50	-57	-64
45 mph	12	5	-2	-9	-16	-23	-30	-37	-44	-51	-58	-65
50 mph	12	4	-3	-10	-17	-24	-31	-38	-45	-52	-60	-67
55 mph	11	4	-3	-11	-18	-25	-32	-39	-46	-54	-61	-68
60 mph	10	3	-4	-11	-19	-26	-33	-40	-48	-55	-62	-69