

# Winter Weather Preparedness

Weather Forecast Office  
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**“A Winter Storm Watch has been issued for my area.  
Now what?”**

## What A Winter Storm Watch Means:

- A Winter Storm Watch is issued typically 36-48 hours before the onset of significant winter weather to allow for preparations.
- Hazardous travel is likely. Icy roads and bridges will make it dangerous and travel is discouraged during the winter storm.
- Ice accumulations on utility lines and tree branches during the winter storm may impact roads and cause power outages.

During the Winter Storm:



DRESS IN LIGHTWEIGHT, WARM LAYERS



LIMIT TIME SPENT OUT IN THE COLD



STAY INDOORS IF POSSIBLE



LET FAUCET DRIP TO PREVENT FROZEN PIPES

## Actions To Take NOW:

- Build an emergency supply kit for both your home and vehicle, and take actions to winterize your home and vehicle.
- Check-in on elderly neighbors, family, and anyone you know that may be vulnerable in these winter conditions.
- STAY TUNED to TV, radio, and the National Weather Service and consider altering your travel plans to AVOID travel during the winter storm.



NWSFortWorth

[weather.gov/fortworth](http://weather.gov/fortworth)

WEATHER ALERT: A Winter Storm Watch is in effect for Ellis County from 6:00 PM Wednesday through 6:00 PM Thursday.

The time to prepare is NOW, and we have compiled some information below

- ✿ Visit [www.ready.gov/winter-weather](http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather) for winter weather resources
- ✿ Go to <http://drivetexas.org> to check driving and current road conditions
- ✿ If you have a power outage, file a report with your electric provider.
  - ONCOR: <https://stormcenter.oncor.com/external/default.html>
  - HilCo: <https://hilco.coop/report-an-outage>

Remember the 4 P's: Protect Pipes, People, Pets, and Plants.



## Freeze Precautions: Remember the 4 P's!

National Weather Service Fort Worth

### Pipes



### Pets



### People



### Plants



Shut off sprinklers as they can create icy surfaces and result in injuries!



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## Tips for the house:

### Inside the house

If [you've prepped your house for the winter weather](#), you're ahead of the game. When the temperature actually drops, here are a few more steps to take.

- **Keep your house heated to a minimum of 65 degrees.** The temperature inside the walls where the pipes are located is substantially colder than the walls themselves. A temperature lower than 65 degrees might not keep the inside walls from freezing.
- **Check the location for the main water shutoff in your home.** And refresh your memory on—or learn—how it works, in case you have to use it.
- **Open hot and cold faucets enough to let them drip slowly.** In severely frigid temperatures, keeping water moving within the pipes will help prevent freezing.
- **Check that fireplaces, wood stoves and electric heaters are working properly.** Make sure there are no combustible items near the heat sources and watch them closely, especially the first time in the season you use them.
- **Keep your fireplace flue closed when you're not using it.**

- **Ask a neighbor to check the house regularly any time you're away.** If pipes freeze or if there's a water leak, quick action could mean far less damage. If you plan to be away for an extended period of time, have the water system—including [swimming pool](#) plumbing, if applicable—drained by a professional to keep pipes from freezing or bursting.

## Heating Safety

- Space heaters cause 1/3 of home heating fires and 4/5 home heating fires deaths. Protect your family with tips from USFA <http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/top-causes-of-fire/heating> #WinterSafety
- Heating is the 2nd leading cause of home fires after cooking. USFA [www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/heating.html](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/heating.html)
- Staying warm with a space heater? Make sure it has an auto shut-off in case it tips over. Check a family/friends today
- Winter fires can be deadly. When using your fireplace always keep a metal or heat-tempered screen around it to stay safe.
- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from a fireplace, wood stove, or space heater. #WinterSafety

## Outside the house

The weight of snow could damage your roof. Backed-up gutters might allow water to seep into your house. Vigilance is key during severe weather—stay ahead of the potential hazards outside your home.

- **Keep sidewalks and entrances to your home free from snow and ice.** You don't want anyone to slip and fall.
- **Watch for ice dams near gutter downspouts.** Ice dams can cause water to build up and seep into your house. Clear gutters of leaves and debris to allow runoff from melting snow and ice to flow freely.
- **Run your swimming pool pump at night when the temperatures are expected to go below freezing.** This will keep the water flowing through the pipes.
- **Keep your garage doors closed.** This will prevent weather damage to whatever's stored in there. Plus, if your garage is attached to your house, the home entrance door from the garage is probably not as well insulated as an exterior door so this will keep more heat in.
- **Double check for dead, damaged or dangerous tree branches and have them removed.** Even if they looked sound earlier in the year, [trees](#) can be affected by ice, snow or wind. When stressed, branches can fall and damage your house or car, or injure someone on or near your property.

## In the event of a problem

Sometimes the unfortunate happens—but quick action can minimize the damage. And if you have a [standard homeowners insurance policy](#), it's likely you're covered for most deep freeze disasters.

- **Don't wait for frozen pipes to burst.** If your pipes are frozen, take measures to thaw them immediately, or call a plumber for assistance.
- **If your pipes burst, first turn off the water.** You know now where the main water shut-off is, right? Cut off the flow, *then* attend to the mess and ...
- **Properly dry and repair any water damage.** This will help prevent any [potential problems with mold](#).

- **Call your insurance professional as soon as possible.** He or she will help you understand what's covered by your policy. And familiarize yourself with the [claims filing process](#).