

Winter Safety & Fallen Trees

There is no getting around it, “Old Man Winter” is on the way, and you know what that means: heavy windstorms, extreme cold, and snow. Many of you may remember the back-to-back snowstorms that crippled the region two years ago. Or perhaps the horrific windstorm and sub-freezing cold that left many of us without power for over a week. Regardless of what the experts predict for the upcoming winter, the odds are that we will experience conditions that could jeopardize the safety of you and your family. Heavy winds, deep freezes, and crippling snows will stretch city and county resources. Emergency responders and civic employees will not be able to assist every neighborhood and family quickly. You must be personally prepared for what winter will bring.

It may be days before the City is able to remove the snow and ice from your street. That means you may not be able to get to the store, which might also be closed. The power may be out for many days and if temperatures are near freezing, you will want to make sure you have a second source of heat in your home. Today is the day to you make sure you and your family are ready for a winter disaster. Start with making sure you have at least three days of food, water, and supplies in your home for your family, as well as your pets. If you have a fireplace, make sure you have enough wood to keep warm. If you have a generator, ensure you have enough fuel. To avoid possible asphyxiation, NEVER run a generator or barbeque in the house or garage.

Winter storms often hit unexpectedly while you are at work, school, or on the road. Make sure each family member has a supply of food, water, and warm clothing at school or work. Your automobile can be a good shelter in the event you get stuck on the road if – and only if – you are properly prepared. Maintain at least a half tank of gas and keep your cell phone charged. Keep an emergency kit that includes food, bottled water, flashlight and extra batteries, first aid kit, additional warm clothes, blankets, flares, and shovel in your car. Each family member should know who to contact and how in the event of an emergency. If you have not yet tested your tire chains and practiced how to put them on, today is that day!! Finally, heavy winds mean downed trees. Never attempt to move or remove trees that are in contact with power lines. Stay clear of downed power lines. They may still be live and could cause injury or death. Report downed trees to the City of Woodinville by calling 425-489-2700.

Check out <http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/> to make a plan. Also, FEMA’s website, http://www.fema.gov/hazard/winter/wi_before.shtm, can help you prepare for a winter disaster. The City’s Snow information at <http://www.ci.woodinville.wa.us/Live/Snow.asp> may also be a useful tool.