

PENTAGON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



Winter Preparedness 2015: *Be Winter Ready*

Polar Vortex Strikes Again!

We have become familiar with this weather phenomenon in recent years, and it means one thing for the National Capital Region: Arctic cold temperatures. And the National Weather Service's (NWS) 2015 winter forecast seems only to validate the recent cold snap. In addition to unseasonably cold temperatures, the NWS is predicting higher-than-normal precipitation. With winter rapidly approaching, now is the time to winterize your home and car and update your vehicle emergency kit to combat the hazards of the season. Carbon monoxide poisoning from the use of alternate heating sources is another winter-related hazard. Now is the time to **Be Winter Ready**.

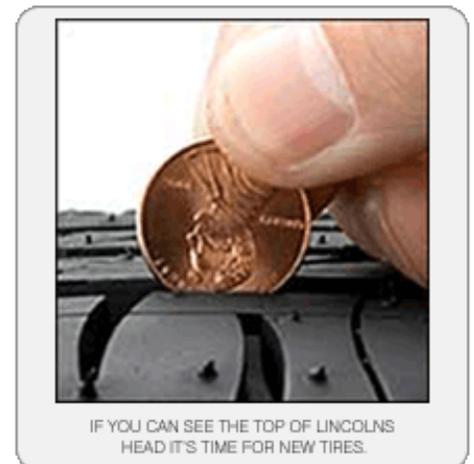


Winterize Your Home

1. Know how to shut off the main water shutoff valve in case of a water line freeze or burst pipe.
2. Leave cabinets to water pipes open to ensure warm air flow.
3. Remove hoses from outdoor water faucets.
4. Turn off water to all outside faucets.
5. Caulk your windows.
6. Add weather stripping to exterior doors.

Winterize Your Vehicle

1. Maintain at least a half tank of gas at all times.
2. Check antifreeze levels and add as necessary.
3. Ensure the battery is in good condition.
4. Check the tire tread; use a penny to measure tread depth (see picture).
5. Check your window washer fluid level.



Update Your Emergency Kit

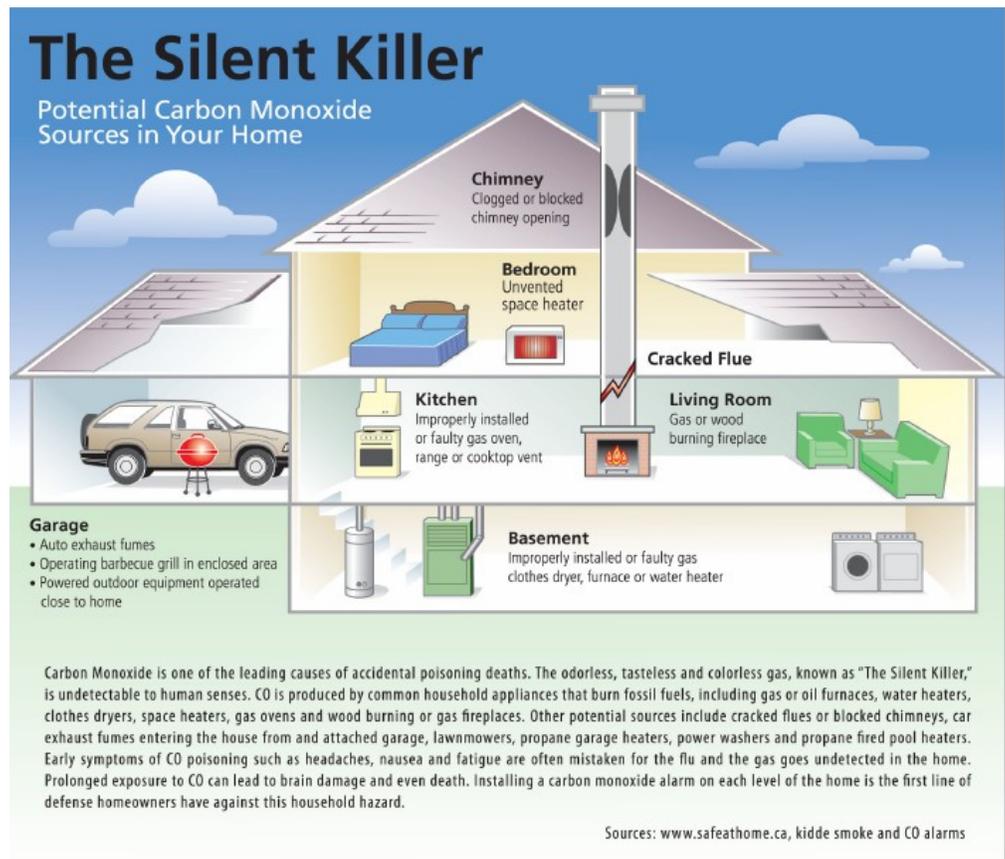
1. Booster cables
2. Sand/kitty litter for traction
3. Blanket
4. Matches
5. Water and high protein/low sodium snacks
6. Flashlight and batteries
7. Reflective vest and flares
8. Scraper
9. Shovel



HoosierHomemade.com
Photo courtesy of HoosierHomemade.com

Carbon Monoxide – The Silent Killer

1. **General.** With the mercury beginning to fall, we often use alternate heating sources (such as fireplaces, generators and kerosene) to either supplement the furnace or heat the house during power outages. But if not vented properly, these alternate sources of heat increase the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide (CO) can be created when fuels such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, and oil burn incompletely.
2. **Affects.** Carbon monoxide is harmful when breathed because it displaces oxygen in the blood and deprives the heart, brain, and other vital organs of oxygen. Large amounts of CO can overcome you in minutes without warning, causing you to lose consciousness and suffocate.
3. **Symptoms** include headache, fatigue, dizziness, drowsiness, or nausea. Sudden chest pain may occur in people with angina; and, during prolonged or high exposure, symptoms may worsen. These symptoms include: vomiting, confusion, physical collapse, loss of consciousness, and muscle weakness. CO poisoning may happen more quickly in vulnerable populations – i.e., young children and the elderly, people with lung or heart disease, and those with elevated CO blood levels, such as smokers.



4. **Prevention.** To stop carbon monoxide poisoning:

- a. Install carbon monoxide alarms in central locations on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas to provide early warning of accumulating carbon monoxide.
- b. If the alarm sounds, move quickly to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door.
- c. Call for help from a fresh air location and remain there until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.
- d. Never use generators, grills, camp stoves or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area. Locate carbon monoxide-generating devices away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.

References

Current and Forecasted Weather:

- National Weather Service (NWS) -- <http://www.weather.gov/>

Government Operating Status:

<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/current-status/>

Preparedness:

- DHS/FEMA Ready website -- <http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
- National Fire Protection Associate CO2 Safety -- <http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/fire-and-safety-equipment/carbon-monoxide/carbon-monoxide-safety-tips>

Apps Corner:

- Ready Virginia -- <http://www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/additional-resources/mobileapp>
- Maryland Prepares -- <http://mema.maryland.gov/Pages/mdprepares.aspx>
- Washington DC Mobile Apps -- <http://octo.dc.gov/page/mobile-apps>
- Office of Personnel Management -- <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/mobile-app/>

Point of Contact:

- Pentagon Office of Emergency Management, 703/571-7737, pfpa.oem@mail.mil