

Cold Weather Safety Tips

As temperatures drop this winter, here are some safety tips help stay safe and warm during the cold weather.

- **Wear layers** of lightweight clothing to stay warm. Hats and gloves help prevent losing body heat. Know the warning signs for [hypothermia and frostbite](#).
- **Bring Pets Indoors.** If pets cannot come inside, make sure they have shelter and access to an unfrozen water source. The Humane Society of the United States has additional pet safety recommendations available by clicking [here](#).
- **Protect your pipes.** Run water, even at a trickle, to help [prevent your pipes from freezing](#).
- **Practice Heating Appliance Safety.** If you are using a space heater, place it on a level, hard surface and keep anything flammable at least three feet away, such as paper, clothing, bedding, curtains, or rugs. Make sure to turn off space heaters prior to leaving the home or going to sleep. Space heaters are the type of equipment most often involved in [home heating equipment fires](#).
- **Use generators outside.** Never operate a generator inside the home, including the basement or garage. [Portable generators](#) are useful during power outages, however, many homeowners are unaware that the improper use of portable generators can be risky. The most common dangers associated with portable generators are [carbon monoxide](#) poisoning, electrical shock or electrocution, and fire hazards. Follow proper [safety precautions](#) to prevent these hazards.
- **Practice Fire Safety.** Make sure your home heating sources are installed according to local codes and permit requirements, and are clean and in working order. Wood or coal heating stoves must be properly vented and in good working order. Dispose of ashes safely. If using a fireplace, make sure embers are out before leaving the room or going to bed. [Heating](#) is the second leading cause of U.S. home fires, deaths and injuries.
- **Keep Furnace Vents and Gas Meters Clear.** Furnaces can malfunction when blocked with snow, ice, or frost. Without proper ventilation, [carbon monoxide](#) can

build up inside the house. Even if your furnace is running properly, it is possible that a vent could be partially blocked. To ensure optimal efficiency and protect your family from carbon monoxide poisoning, it is important to keep your furnace vents clear. While checking your vents, make sure your gas meters are free of snow, ice, and frost as well. If you have questions or concerns about your gas meter, contact the gas service/delivery company for assistance.

- **Winter Storm Preparation.** [Winter storms](#) can cause dangerous and sometimes life-threatening conditions. Blinding wind-driven snow, extreme cold, icy road conditions, downed trees, and power lines can all wreak havoc on our daily schedules. Preparing for a storm will greatly reduce your risk of injury to your family or damage to your home in the case of an emergency.
- **Christmas Trees** are [combustible items](#) that become increasingly flammable as they continue to dry out in your home. Nearly 40 percent of home fires that begin with Christmas trees occur in January. Although [Christmas tree fires](#) are not common, when they do occur they're much more likely to be serious. To learn more about Christmas Tree disposal in Saco, [click here](#).

Visit the [National Weather Service website](#), the [American Red Cross website](#), the [FEMA website](#), or the [National Fire Protection Association website](#) for additional cold weather and winter storm safety tips!