

Surviving a Winter Storm

Advice from the City of Nashua

- **911 is for emergencies** - UNLESS there is an emergency, do not call 9-1-1. That number should ONLY be used if there is an emergency, or if someone is injured or in danger.
- **Don't approach power lines** - if there are power lines down in your neighborhood, do call 9-1-1 and call your utility company. **DO NOT GO NEAR DOWNED POWER LINES.**
- **Use battery powered devices** - if you have a battery-powered radio or television, listen to it – especially for news at the top of each hour – to find out when the power might be restored.
- **Do not leave candles unattended** - try to use battery-powered lights instead.
- **Dress to stay warm** - wear layers, including a sweater, sweatshirt or even a jacket. You lose heat through your hands and the top of your head. Wear gloves and a knit hat, not just a baseball cap.
- **Watch for signs of frostbite** - loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in the extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes or the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, seek medical help immediately.
- **Watch for signs of hypothermia** - uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. If symptoms are detected, get the victim to a warm location, remove any wet clothing, warm the center of the body first and give warm, non-alcoholic beverages, if the victim is conscious. Get medical help, as soon as possible.

- **Keep the fridge closed** - avoid opening your refrigerator and freezer as much as possible. Food inside should stay cold for hours if the door is left closed.
- **Use your warm water** - if you are cold, take a warm shower to increase your body temperature. Your hot water tank, even if electric, will stay warm for a few hours.
- **Get any generator properly installed** - if you have a generator, do not connect it to your home's power system unless it has been properly installed and disconnects you from the main power grid when it is operating. If you do not disconnect from the power grid, you can be sending electricity back down the lines; not just to your home. That could be deadly for power company workers.
- **No outdoor heaters inside the house** - if you have a regular wood stove or fireplace, you can use it for heat. However, DO NOT USE kerosene heaters, BBQs, or any outdoor type heater inside. Such devices create poisonous gases such as carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is an odorless and colorless gas given off by combustion and could kill.
- **Be a good neighbor** - check on your elderly neighbors or those who may have medical conditions or use medical machinery that operates on electricity. Make sure they are dressed appropriately warm. If someone needs to have machinery that operates on electricity, move her to a place where electricity is working.
- **Drive extra carefully** - if you have to go out, drive carefully. Remember that traffic signals may be out during a power outage. Consider each intersection to be a four-way stop and drive defensively.
- **Unplug some of your major appliances** - when the power comes back on, all of those appliances can create a drain or power surge. This can harm sensitive equipment. To avoid a power surge when the electricity returns, turn off computers,

TVs, stereos and other unnecessary electronic equipment at the power source. Leave a light on so you'll know when the power is restored.

- **Shut off the water if freezing occurs** - individuals and their families should be knowledgeable on how to shut off the water source to the home in the event that the pipes freeze and burst. This action will stop the water flow and help minimize the damage to the home. Residents who experience frozen or burst water pipes should contact a plumber and their insurance agent. Never try to thaw a pipe with an open flame or torch and be aware of the potential for electric shock in and around standing water. ***To keep water pipes from freezing in the home:***
 - Let faucets drip a little to avoid freezing;
 - Open cabinet doors to allow more heat to get to un-insulated pipes under a sink or appliance near an outer wall; and
 - Make sure heat is left on and set no lower than 55 degrees.