

A recipe for winter survival

Safe, warm, well-fed and connected

Winter in Wyoming comes with road closures, inclement weather conditions, intermittent power outages, and other numerous challenges that can threaten lives.

Implementing a plan for your home, vehicles, domestic animals, and for yourself and family is key to being prepared. The National Weather Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency recommend a “72 hour” kit for your family. A “1 week” kit may be more appropriate for some rural parts of Wyoming.

Being safe

Before winter weather arrives, ensure a supply of at least 30 days of prescriptions and medical supplies you regularly use, suitable first aid

kits, and working fire extinguishers (check these twice a year). When planning to travel in winter conditions, each vehicle should have food, water, tools, blankets, and other supplies. Important regular vehicle maintenance should be kept up including tire inspections. At home, ensure smoke detectors and carbon monoxide sensors are functioning. Communicate with family and friends about travel plans or other issues.

Staying warm

Persistent and often cool winds can impact anyone at any time of the year. In Wyoming, law enforcement and Emergency Medical Technicians usually treat accident victims for “chill factor” even during summer months.

During winter storms staying hydrated is crucial, as is wearing a number of clothing layers with wind/waterproof layers on the outside with insulating layers underneath when outdoors. Remember to protect your face and extremities. Frostbite and hypothermia can happen quickly. At home, check your heating supplies whether wood, gas, coal, or other. Consider having an alternate heat source in case your primary source, such as electricity or gas, goes out. Weatherize dwellings during the summer to prevent issues during winter.

If stalled in a vehicle, stay with the vehicle and run it just enough to stay a bit less than comfortable, such as running your engine for 10 minutes every half hour with the windows cracked slightly open to avoid carbon monoxide risks. Remember to tell your friends an expected time of arrival so if you are an hour late help will be en route. Consider backup energy sources such as a generator outside if you live in a remote area. Have spare fuel stored safely outside for vehicles and generators.

Well-fed in storms

Food provides calories to help bodies stay warm and functioning. Proper hydration keeps capillary vessels in extremities functioning and inhibits frostbite. During winters, plan on keeping at least seven days of



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shelf stable food. Remember, power outages can affect keeping fresh produce, frozen products, and dairy for extended periods. Have alternate food sources such as canned and dry goods in case an outage lasts several days. A supplemental cooking source is also a good idea if there is no electricity or gas. Have at least five days of drinking water for each person and about 5 gallons of washing water stored for each person. Have at least two “person days” of food in each vehicle. Remember to plan for dietary needs of pets and other animals as well. Light is important. Have at least 40 hours of alternative lighting on hand in Wyoming. This might be candles or battery powered lights. Remember that cold shortens battery life.

Staying connected

Staying connected during storm and power outages is challenging in Wyoming. Some areas have weak or no cellular coverage, especially if a Wi-Fi booster or modem is without power. Stay safe if you need to move to where a signal is available. Consider purchasing some solar/wind radios that have a light, a radio, and can charge cell phones. They can be purchased for \$35–\$100. Put several in the house and one in each vehicle. Set them in the sun for a day each month. Check with friends and neighbors regularly whether at home or on the road, but conserve your batteries. Listen to local weather and safety broadcasts on a regular basis. Consider signing up for Wyoming 5-1-1, the road condition report from the Wyoming Department of Transportation.

Some great lists and resources are available at www.ready.gov.

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