

Winter weather and snowy conditions are common in Pine Mountain Club, and the time to get prepared for winter storms is before they happen. FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) offers the following advice in being prepared for winter weather before it strikes.

Before Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

Get or put together an emergency supply kit, which includes items like non-perishable food, water, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra flashlights and batteries.

Thoroughly check and update your family's emergency supply kit before winter approaches and add the following supplies in preparation for winter weather:

Before Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

- Rock salt to melt ice on walkways
 - Sand to improve traction
 - Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.
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Prepare Your Family

- Create a family emergency plan. Your family may not be together when a major storm hits, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
- During an emergency, it may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call locally, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.
- You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, daycare and school. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one.

- Become a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) team member and keep your training current.
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Prepare Your Home

- Prepare for possible isolation in your home by having sufficient heating fuel; regular fuel sources (electricity or propane delivery) may be cut off. For example, store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood-burning stove or an abundance of pellets for a battery-backed-up pellet stove.
 - Winterize your home to extend the life of your fuel supply by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic.
 - Winterize your house, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors or equipment. Clear rain gutters; repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.
 - Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk, as more people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.
 - Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).
 - Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors or employees.
 - Hire a contractor to check the structural ability of the roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow -- or water, if drains on flat roofs do not work.
 - Maintain ventilation when using kerosene heaters to avoid build-up of toxic fumes. Refuel kerosene heaters outside and keep them at least 3 feet from flammable objects.
 - Conserve fuel, if necessary, by keeping your residence cooler than normal. Temporarily close off heat to some rooms.
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Prepare Your Car

- Check or have a mechanic check the following items on your car:
- Antifreeze levels - ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
- Battery and ignition system - should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean.
- Brakes - check for wear and fluid levels.
- Exhaust system - check for leaks and crimped pipes and repair or replace as necessary. Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.
- Fuel and air filters - replace and keep water out of the system by using additives and maintaining at least half a tank of gas.
- Heater and defroster - ensure they work properly.
- Lights and flashing hazard lights - check for serviceability.
- Oil - check for level and weight. Heavier oils congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.
- Thermostat - ensure it works properly.
- Windshield wiper equipment - repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.
- Install good winter tires. Make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. However, chains or snow tires with studs may be required here.
- **Place a winter emergency kit in each car that includes:** A shovel, windshield scraper and small broom, flashlight, battery powered radio, extra batteries, water, snack food, matches, extra hats, socks and mittens, first aid kit with pocket knife, necessary medications, blanket(s), tow chain or rope, road salt and sand, booster cables, emergency flares and a fluorescent distress flag.