



**Public Health**  
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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Urges Champaign County Residents to Prepare for Possible Winter Storms and Power Outages**

### ***Simple Steps Can Help Keep You Safe in Seasonal Storms***

Champaign, IL – Seasonal winter storms are a frequent occurrence in central Illinois. During the “ice storm of 2005” more than 400,000 citizens were without power for several days during frigid temperatures. According to the National Weather Service, there has not been a winter in Illinois without a severe storm in the past century, and in fact, Illinois experiences an average of five severe storms every year.

A severe winter storm could prevent Champaign County residents from leaving their homes for several days, perhaps living without electricity or heat. A basic emergency preparedness kit can help residents remain safe until the winter storm is over or power is restored. A basic winter preparedness kit should include:

- Adequate clothing and blankets for personal warmth
- 2-week supply of non-perishable food items for family members and pets
- 2-week water supply for family and pets (1 gallon per person per day)
- Flashlight and portable radio with spare batteries
- First aid kit
- Extra medications and special items for babies, the disabled, elderly and pets

Severe winter storms often lead to extensive as well and extended power outages. Power outages that last longer than two hours may create food safety issues. If the power is out for longer than two hours, the food in your refrigerator and freezer may not be safe to consume. Citizens should use the following guidelines if the power is out longer than two hours:

- **FROZEN FOOD:**
  - A freezer that is half full should hold food safely for up to 24 hours
  - A full freezer should hold food safely for up to 48 hours
  - Avoid opening the freezer door during a power outage
  - Throw away any food that has a temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit or above
- **REFRIGERATED FOOD:**
  - Pack milk, other dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, gravy, and spoilable leftovers into a cooler surrounded by ice or snow
  - Throw away any food that has a temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit or above

When the power goes out, water purification systems may not be functioning fully. Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled or treated water. Questionable water can be treated with chlorine tablets, iodine tablets or unscented household chlorine bleach (1/8 teaspoon per gallon of water).

Citizens are urged to stay in their homes whenever possible. Driving during severe weather is hazardous, and in the event of an accident or vehicle failure, finding assistance and adequate shelter may prove challenging. If travel cannot be avoided, please utilize the following tips:

- Check the latest weather conditions on the travel route
- Make sure all the components of your car are in good operational condition paying special attention to tires, wipers and lights
- Start your trip with a full tank of gas
- Provide an itinerary to a friend or family member
- Travel only in the daytime on main roads
- Keep a basic winter preparedness kit in the car; include a cell phone and charger

Winter storms and power outages are challenging, but they do not need to be life threatening. CUPHD urges citizens to take these simple steps to keep loved ones and themselves safe.

For more information on emergency preparedness please contact CUPHD at (217) 352-7961 or visit CUPHD on the web at [www.cuphd.org](http://www.cuphd.org).

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