

WI Dept. of Military Affairs: November 14-18 is winter weather awareness week in Wisconsin

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Another Wisconsin winter is just around the corner and now is a great time to plan for what you will do when temperatures drop and the snow starts falling. To help encourage everyone to prepare, Gov. Tony Evers has declared Nov. 14-18 Winter Weather Awareness Week in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin winters can be dangerous, which is why it's so important to have a plan and to be ready before there is snow in the forecast," said Wisconsin Emergency Management Administrator Greg Engle. "Take time now to get your vehicle ready for winter weather, schedule a furnace tune-up and make sure your home emergency kit is fully stocked with essential supplies."

According to the National Weather Service, Wisconsin experiences an average of three to six winter storms during the season. Last winter, the highest one-day snowfall total in the state of 20 inches was reported on Madeline Island in Ashland County on Feb. 20, 2022. Bayfield in Bayfield County recorded 145.9 inches of snow last winter, giving it the highest seasonal snowfall total in the state. The coldest temperature recorded in Wisconsin last winter was -34 degrees Fahrenheit on Jan. 26, 2022, in the city of Merrill in Lincoln County.

The first step to keeping safe this winter is to stay informed. Check in with the [National Weather Service](#) and other trusted local sources daily for current forecasts. When heavy snow or ice are expected, be prepared by stocking up on additional supplies, making sure you have an emergency kit at home and in your vehicle, and having a plan for what to do if you lose power at home.

While heavy snowfalls are always a concern, snow squalls can quickly put people in danger. Snow squalls are brief and intense snowstorms, where high winds can result in whiteout conditions and icy roadways. Snow Squall Warnings are a newer type of alert intended to inform people of conditions that can make travel extremely dangerous. You can find more information about these warnings at <https://www.weather.gov/safety/winter-snow-squall>.

The freezing temperatures of the winter months can be dangerous for many people, leading to cold-related illnesses and injuries such as hypothermia and frostbite. During the winter of 2021-22, there were 91 deaths and over 2,200 cold-related emergency department visits in the state. People should prepare by ensuring they are wearing weather-appropriate clothing and limiting their time outdoors during periods of extreme cold.

“While we all have to take care to avoid injury from the cold and snow, there are Wisconsinites who are especially vulnerable to injury or even death when the temperatures fall. They include older adults, infants, people without adequate heat sources or shelter and those who work and play outdoors,” said Paula Tran, State Health Officer. “We encourage everyone to check on family, friends, and neighbors during the winter to make sure they’re staying safe.”

At home or in your car, winter emergency kits should include items such as food, water, a flashlight and batteries, and blankets. In your vehicle, include a snow shovel, extra gloves and hats, cell phone charger, and kitty litter or sand to help give your wheels traction on icy roads in case you get stuck.

Prepare your home by having your furnace serviced regularly. Check doorways and windows for signs they are allowing cold air into your home. Test carbon monoxide detectors to make sure they are working properly and have fresh batteries. Keep any free-standing heating devices away from curtains or other objects that could catch fire.

Ice and snow on the roads remain a major threat to drivers throughout the state. Last winter, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation said 38 people were killed and 3,136 were injured in crashes involving winter road conditions. Over the last five years, Wisconsin averaged 42 fatalities and 3,884 injuries each year from vehicle crashes caused by winter road conditions.

While driving in snow or ice, remain distraction-free and adjust your speed for

current conditions. Use 511 Wisconsin to check travel conditions before you leave home. This information, along with live traffic cameras and traffic alerts, is accessible through the free 511 Wisconsin mobile app, on [Twitter](#), or the mobile-friendly site www.511wi.gov.

Gov. Evers' Winter Weather Awareness Week proclamation is available [here](#).

Find more information on winter safety in the ReadyWisconsin Winter Weather Awareness Week media packet, located [here](#).

You can also follow ReadyWisconsin on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for tips throughout the winter months and updates on dangerous weather conditions.