

Winter Weather Public Service Announcement

Winter Weather Safety and Preparedness Tips

With consistent El Nino winter weather disturbances blanketing the North Carolina mountains on a regular basis, we want to make sure that you are prepared for each storm to ensure that you and your family have a fun and safe winter weather experience. Please find below tips to make sure these storms continue to be both fun and safe.

- Layer your clothing when you go out and always have an extra pair of socks and gloves handy. The combination of extreme cold and wetness escalates the potential threats of hypothermia and cotton textiles absorb water easily, losing all its insulation properties.
- **ABSOLUTELY DO NOT WALK ON FROZEN BODIES OF WATER.** Don't Walk on Ponds, Lakes, Streams, or other bodies of frozen water. The temperatures are not cold enough, nor sustained long enough, to enable proper freezing to support added weight. Falling through the ice can lead to serious consequences putting both your life and the lives of others in danger. Making a breakthrough can lead immediately to hypothermia. According to mayoclinic.com, "Water doesn't have to be extremely cold to cause hypothermia. Any water that's colder than body temperature causes heat loss. Water that's colder than 70 F can quickly begin to cause hypothermia." In addition to cold water, the effects of wind chills on your cold, wet body will quickly propel you into a state of hypothermia. Frostbite, loss of limbs, possible unconsciousness, and even cardiac arrest are just a few added medical conditions that could result from falling through the ice. Keep in mind, there is always the risk of drowning. Simply put, please do NOT attempt to walk on frozen bodies of water.
- Be aware that weather conditions can change suddenly, so be prepared for white out conditions, hazardous driving conditions, black ice on sidewalks and roads, and biting wind chills. All of which can be very dangerous.
- When traveling in your car, always keep a sufficient amount of fuel in your tank, keep a safe distance between you and the other vehicles on the road, and have an emergency bag with you. A proper emergency bag should include: a protective blanket, warm clothing, gloves, hats, flashlights, bottled water, and snack food like granola bars. Other items that can come in handy are a shovel, hot hands, and your cell phone.
- If you happen to suffer an injury when enjoying the winter fun, be sure to treat your injuries as soon as possible. If needed, dial 911 for the Beech Mountain Police Department for immediate assistance.
- Sled only in clear, unobstructed areas that provide you with a safe finish. **DO NOT SLED ON THE ROADS.** Deep snow and drifts can hide hazards such as rocks, debris, and retaining walls, that can quickly end your sledding experience. A great, safe place to sled is on the FREE community sledding hill located beside Town Hall. When sledding on the town hill, please follow all rules and regulations and be conscious of your fellow sledders.
- Use this "calm before the storm" to stop by Fred's and stock up on dry firewood, groceries (non-perishables), and water. You should also use this time to locate flashlights, candles, lanterns, and warm blankets throughout your home. Also, make a quick list of your utility companies and place it in an easy to find spot. Taking these precautions will leave you prepared should you lose power. If the power does go out, pay close attention to your metal pipes. You may want to go ahead and prep them (if you haven't already) with insulation and other techniques that will prevent pipes from freezing and eventually bursting. If you do lose power, you may also want to seal off doorways and windows with towels and other items to prevent heat loss.
- Last, but not least, make sure you have your snow shovel and Yak Trax handy!

The snow is most definitely beautiful and fun. It is something our community thrives on, but both demand and deserve your respect and require you to take extra caution to ensure the safety of you and your family. Following these and other common sense practices will help you have a safe and fun experience in the winter weather! Happy Shoveling, Skiing, and Sledding!