



**Governor John R. Kasich**

American Red Cross  
Emergency Management Association of Ohio  
Hands On, Central Ohio  
National Weather Service  
Ohio Department of Aging  
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal  
Ohio Department of Education

Ohio Department of Health  
Ohio Department of Insurance  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Ohio Department of Public Safety -Ohio EMA  
Ohio Department of Transportation  
Ohio Insurance Institute  
Ohio News Network

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Don't Get Caught in the Cold – Get Ready for Winter**  
***Winter Safety Awareness Week is November 13-19***

Columbus, OH – A freak October snowstorm that dumped up to 32 inches of snow on the New England states two weeks ago was responsible for 29 deaths and caused power outages to 2 million people. Ohio hasn't seen snow yet this season, but with overnight temperatures dipping in the 30s, and chilly, frosty mornings, we know that winter is on its way. The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA) encourages everyone to take the time now to prepare themselves and their homes for the upcoming season.

In a coordinated effort with OCSWA, Governor John R. Kasich has proclaimed November 13-19 as Ohio's Winter Safety Awareness Week. This is an ideal time for homes, schools, businesses and organizations to update their safety plans and disaster supply kits and prepare for winter-related incidents.

“Don't let winter catch you off-guard. Winterize your homes and vehicles now, before the first major snowfall hits,” said Nancy Dragani, executive director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. “Heavy snow and ice can bring down power lines for days. So, get ready now, just in case. Ensure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working. Ensure you have enough stored food and water to supply your family for several days. Review your emergency plans. Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio to be notified of storm watches and warnings in your area.”

To help prepare for the upcoming winter months, OCSWA recommends the following:

***Prepare your home for winter.*** Cut and remove low-hanging and dead tree branches. Ice, snow and strong winds can cause tree limbs to break and fall. Have your gutters cleaned. Snow and ice can build up quickly if gutters are clogged with debris. Have auxiliary heaters, furnaces and fireplaces maintenance checked or serviced before using. If using a portable generator, read instructions thoroughly to guard against carbon monoxide poisoning. Review your homeowner's insurance policy; consider your need for flood insurance.

***Prepare winter disaster kits for the home and vehicle.*** Refresh stored nonperishable foods and bottled water. Change the batteries in your smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and radios. Winter emergency kits should include warm clothing, blankets, flashlights, new batteries, coats, hats, gloves, a battery-operated or hand-cranked radio, first aid kit, and enough nonperishable food and water (one gallon per person, per day) to sustain each family member for at least three days. Have stored food, bottled water and supplies for your pets, as well.

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“Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness”

[www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov)

***Invest in a NOAA Public Alert/Weather Radio.*** Every home, school and business should have a tone-alert weather radio with a battery back-up. Weather and public alert radios are programmed to automatically sound an alert during public safety and severe weather events. Click on [www.weather.gov/nwr/](http://www.weather.gov/nwr/) for additional information.

***Update your disaster preparedness plans.*** Every home, school, business and organization should have written plans for the different types of disasters that can occur. Review the plans with the entire family or staff. Everyone should know what to do in the event of a snow or ice storm, a prolonged power outage, a flood or fire. Post contact information for your local emergency management agency. Prepare and practice drills that require sheltering in place and evacuation. Update your emergency contact list and establish a meeting place outside of the home, school or business, where others will know where to find or meet you.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is an advocate for emergency preparedness and is comprised of representatives from the American Red Cross; Emergency Management Association of Ohio; National Weather Service; Hands On, Central Ohio; Ohio Department of Public Safety-Emergency Management Agency; Ohio Insurance Institute; Ohio News Network; Ohio Department of Commerce – State Fire Marshal; and the Ohio Departments of Aging, Education, Health, Insurance, Natural Resources, and Transportation.

For additional information on winter weather safety and severe weather preparedness, visit OCSWA's site at [www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov).

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