



**Governor John R. Kasich**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE OHIO COMMITTEE FOR SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS ENCOURAGES OHIOANS TO BE SAFE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

Winter time is holiday time. And with that usually comes lots of home celebrating, entertaining and cooking. Unfortunately, winter time is an opportune time for home disasters such as fires or enduring severe winter events such as snow storms, flooding or prolonged power outages.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness offers these safety tips to help Ohio families reduce their risks of suffering winter hazards and emergencies:

**HOLIDAY DECORATING**

Trees

- If purchasing an artificial tree, look for a “Fire Resistant” label.
- If you have a metallic tree, never add electric lights to it. You could get electrocuted.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. Make sure the needles are soft and not falling off. Hard, brittle needles are signs of a dry tree which can easily catch fire.
- Live trees need lots of water. Cut about one inch off the bottom of the trunk before putting the tree in the stand. Add water and check the tree daily.
- Do not block your exit door with your tree.
- Remove live trees from your home as soon as possible. Most Christmas tree fires occur on or after New Year’s Day.

Lights

- Outdoor lights are specifically labeled for outdoor use. Outdoor lights should be fastened securely and placed on a ground fault interrupter circuit.
- Do not connect too many light sets together, and never use extension cords that are worn or cracked. Do not run cords under rugs or over sharp objects.
- Turn off lights before you go to bed or leave the home.
- Never leave burning candles unattended.

**ALTERNATIVE HEATING/POWER SOURCES**

- Use kerosene heaters and space heaters according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Alternative heaters need space. Keep anything combustible at least three feet away.
- Ensure your alternative heaters have ‘tip switches.’ These switches are designed to automatically turn the heater off, in the event it tips over.
- Do not use the kitchen oven or stove to heat your home. In addition to being a fire hazard, it can be a source of toxic fumes, such as carbon monoxide.

- Never refuel a space heater while it is operating or still hot. Refuel outdoors, only.
- When using power generators, follow the manufacturer's instructions and guidelines.
- Never use a generator inside enclosed areas such as the home, garage, crawlspace, shed, or similar area, even if using fans or opening doors and windows for ventilation. Deadly levels of carbon monoxide can quickly build up and linger for hours, even after the generator has been shut off.
- Install battery-operated CO alarms in the home. Test batteries monthly.

### **FIRE SAFETY**

- Check/test your smoke detectors monthly.
- Replace the batteries in your smoke detectors twice a year. When you change the time on your clocks for Daylight Savings, change your smoke detector batteries.
- Have a fire escape plan. Each room should have two ways out. Practice fire drills with family members. Have a meeting place outside of the home.
- Ensure house guests are aware of your fire escape plan.
- If a fire occurs in your home, GET OUT, STAY OUT and CALL 911 for help.

### **BUILD EMERGENCY SUPPLY KITS**

Part of being prepared is being equipped with the proper supplies you may need in case of an emergency or disaster. Keep your supplies in an easy-to-carry emergency preparedness kit that you can use at home or take with you, in case you need to evacuate. Basic supplies for kits are as follows:

- Bottled Water – 1 gallon per person, per day (3-day supply for evacuation; 2-week supply for home, if possible)
- Food – Non-perishable, easy-to-prepare items (minimum, 3-day supply)
- Flashlights or Battery-Operated Lanterns
- Battery-Powered NOAA Weather Radio
- Extra Batteries
- First Aid Kit, Extra Prescribed Medications
- Multi-Purpose Tool
- Sanitation and Personal Hygiene Items
- Copies of Personal Documents (medication lists, medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)
- Cell Phones, Chargers, Extra Batteries
- Family and Emergency Contact Information/Communication Plan
- Extra Cash (if extended power outage, ATMs may not operate)
- Extra Blankets, Sleeping Bags
- Cold Weather Clothing (sweaters, jackets, hats, gloves, etc.)
- Food, Water, Supplies for Pets

For additional information on winter safety and preparedness, visit the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather website at [www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov).

*The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is comprised of 16 local, state and federal organizations and agencies whose unified goal is to educate Ohioans about the actions they can take to protect themselves and others before, during and after severe weather occurs.*