



Governor John R. Kasich

American Red Cross	Ohio Department of Insurance
Emergency Management Association of Ohio	Ohio Department of Mental Health
National Weather Service	Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Citizen Corps	Ohio Department of Public Safety -Ohio EMA
Ohio Department of Aging	Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal	Ohio Insurance Institute
Ohio Department of Education	WBNS-10TV
Ohio Department of Health	

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 14, 2013

Contact: Kelli Blackwell, Ohio EMA, 614-799-3694

WINTER'S GIVEN OHIO A SNEAK-PREVIEW. ARE YOU READY?
Winter Safety Awareness Week is November 17-23, 2013

Columbus, OH – Winter made an early appearance this fall. Northeast Ohio received several inches of heavy snow on October 24. The snow downed tree limbs, caused power outages and closed schools. The majority of the state got a taste of winter again, on Tuesday morning after rain showers changed to ice and snow overnight. Another several inches of snow was forecasted for northern Ohio, with the National Weather Service issuing Lake Effect Snow Warnings and Advisories for multiple counties.

Sunday, November 17 kicks off Ohio's Winter Safety Awareness Week. As part of a coordinated effort with the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA), Gov. John R. Kasich encourages Ohioans to update their safety plans, replenish their disaster supply kits to sustain all household members for several days, and prepare themselves and their property for winter-related incidents.

"Winter Safety Week is good time to winterize vehicles," said Nancy Dragani, Executive Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. "Now is a good time to get your car or truck tuned up and your tires and batteries checked. Make sure brakes, lights and turn signals are working properly. Don't forget to check the window washer fluid reservoir, and make sure your wiper blades are in good, working condition."

It is also important to be informed – know before you go. Pay attention to weather forecasts and reports. Listen for reports of school and business closings, snow emergencies, traffic delays or road closures. Plan your drive time accordingly.

To help prepare for winter, 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 every family member for several days. Have stored food, bottled water and supplies for your pets, as well.

"Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness"

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/ for additional information.

Update your disaster preparedness plans. Every home, school, and business 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.

OCSWA is an advocate for emergency preparedness and is comprised of representatives from the following: American Red Cross; Emergency Management Association of Ohio; National Weather Service; Ohio Citizen Corps; Ohio Department of Public Safety-Emergency Management Agency; Ohio Insurance Institute; Ohio Department of Commerce – State Fire Marshal; Ohio Departments of Aging, Education, Health, Insurance, Mental Health, Natural Resources, and Transportation, and WBNS-10TV.

For additional information on winter weather safety and severe weather preparedness, visit OCSWA's site at www.weathersafety.ohio.gov.

###