



# MEDIA RELEASE

## Emergency Management Agency

Ohio Emergency Management Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Tips for Ohioans Dealing with Power Outages, Winter Weather

**Columbus, OH** – State officials are reminding those residents that are experiencing power outages to take the necessary steps to help their family, friends and neighbors through this winter storm that dumped a foot of snow or more in several Southern Ohio counties.

**Cold temperatures can lead to illnesses and injuries such as hypothermia and frostbite.** Warming centers and shelters have been set up in several counties in southern Ohio. Check with your county emergency management agency for details.

**Some areas are experiencing localized flooding,** due to icy conditions use extreme caution on roads that appear wet or ice covered. Never drive through a flooded roadway. Frozen or flooded waters may be deeper than they appear.

**Stay away from downed power lines.** Fallen power lines are dangerous because they may carry an electric current that can cause serious or even fatal injuries. Any downed or fallen wire should be treated as live and dangerous, and should be avoided. If you encounter a fallen wire, keep yourself and others away, and call 911 and your local power company immediately.

**Ohioans awaiting power restoration who are relying on generators** are being urged to use caution because of an increased risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide, or CO, is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death. A single gas-powered generator can produce as much as 100 times more poisonous Carbon monoxide gas than a car's exhaust according to the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

If using a generator or cooking when the electricity is out:

- Never use a generator inside your home, basement or garage.

- Operate generators outdoors as far away from your house as possible. Even 15 feet away the building may still be dangerous because the CO fumes can enter the home through windows, doors or vents.
- Never refuel a generator while it is running or hot.
- Install CO detectors inside the home near all the sleeping areas.
- Never use a charcoal grill or a barbecue grill indoors. Using a grill indoors will cause a build-up of CO inside your home, cabin, or camper unless you use it inside a vented fireplace.
- Never burn charcoal indoors. Burning charcoal — red, gray, black, or white — gives off CO.
- Never use a portable gas camp stove indoors. Using a gas camp stove indoors can cause CO to build up inside your home, cabin, or camper.

If using a fireplace or wood stove:

- Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a certified chimney specialist.
- Keep the hearth area clear of debris, decorations and flammable material.
- Do not burn anything in a stove or fireplace that is not vented.
- Do not leave fires burning unattended.

If using a portable heater:

- Keep the heater at least one foot away from people, pets and objects.
- Do not leave portable heaters on when no one is home.
- Turn the heater down or off when you are sleeping.
- Unplug electrical appliances/heaters when not in use.
- Never hang damp clothes near a heater to dry them.

**Be sure to check on your neighbors and older adults** who are at increased risk for complications from conditions including snow, ice, bitter cold and more. Snow and ice can limit mobility and increase isolation and feelings of depression, especially in older adults. The Ohio Department of Aging recommends checking on aging loved ones and neighbors during severe weather:

- Are they staying warm? Is their heating system working properly and set at reasonable temperature? Are they using portable heaters safely?
- Do they need medical attention? Do they have symptoms of cold-related illness (e.g., shivering, exhaustion, confusion, memory loss, slurred speech or odd skin color)? Have they fallen?
- Do they have an adequate food and water supply and a safe way to prepare meals? Do they have non-perishable food that can be prepared without electricity?
- Can they get help if they need it? Do they have access to a phone that works, even if the power goes out? Do they know who they will contact if they need assistance?