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Emergency Management Association of Ohio  
National Weather Service  
Ohio Citizen Corps  
Ohio Department of Aging  
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal  
Ohio Department of Education  
Ohio Department of Health

**Governor John R. Kasich**

Ohio Department of Insurance  
Ohio Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Services  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Ohio Department of Public Safety - Ohio EMA  
Ohio Department of Transportation  
Ohio Insurance Institute  
Ohio Silver Jackets  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NOAA's Climate Prediction Center: This Winter, La Niña is a Potential 'Wildcard'  
*Get Ready, Ohio! Winter Safety Awareness Week is November 12-18, 2017***

**Columbus, OH** – Will Ohio have another mild winter like the last two, or will Mother Nature deal the Buckeye State a cold, cruel blast of winter weather? The experts are not sure. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center, La Niña may emerge for the second time as "the biggest wildcard" in how this year's winter will be. Ohio may be wetter and warmer than normal this season.

Instead of taking chances, Ohioans should take steps now – before winter hits – to be prepared for this upcoming cold season.

In preparation, Gov. John R. Kasich and the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA) are promoting Winter Safety Awareness Week, November 12-18. During this week, Gov. Kasich encourages homes and businesses to update their safety plans, replenish supplies in their emergency kits, and prepare themselves, their vehicles and property for winter-related incidents.

"Winter Safety Awareness Week is the perfect time to start preparing your homes and vehicles for winter," said Ohio EMA Executive Director Sima Merick. "Because of the warmer weather we had last winter, parts of Ohio experienced thunderstorms, damaging winds and flooding. And just Sunday, Ohio experienced severe thunderstorms, tornadoes and flash flooding. So, regardless of the season, it's best for Ohioans to be prepared for all severe weather."

**OCSWA recommends the following winter preparedness tips:**

**[Prepare your home for winter.](#)** Remove and cut away low-hanging and dead tree branches. Strong winds, ice and snow can cause tree limbs to break and could cause damage to your home. Have your gutters cleaned. Snow and ice can build up quickly if clogged with debris.

**[Practice fire safety and prevention.](#)** With winter months and the holiday season, people are indoors more, and cook, decorate and entertain more – which unfortunately, can lead to more home fires. The best protection is to have working smoke detectors in the home. Test your smoke detectors monthly. Conduct fire drills. Change the batteries in you smoke and carbon monoxide detectors twice a year – when you change your clocks, change your batteries. Have auxiliary heaters, furnaces and fireplaces checked or serviced before using. Cooking-related fires are the number one cause of home fires. Never leave cooking food unattended. Keep towels, potholders, paper away from the stove's heat sources.

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"Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness"

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

***Prepare winter emergency supplies kits for the home and vehicle.*** Check the expiration dates on nonperishable food items, bottled water/beverages and medications. Winter emergency kits should include flashlights, extra batteries, blankets, coats, hats, gloves, a battery-operated radio/Weather Radio, first aid kit, cell phone and charger, and enough nonperishable food and water (one gallon per person, per day) to sustain every household member for several days. Have stored food, bottled water and supplies for your pets, as well.

***Check on your neighbors.*** Comprehensive preparedness requires whole communities to participate in a “*Neighbors Helping Neighbors*” approach. If severe weather is forecasted or has just occurred, or if your neighborhood has an extended power outage, check on your neighbors and family members – especially those who are older or have functional needs – to ensure that they are okay and that they have the resources to stay safe and warm. Your communication plan might include exchanging phone numbers to call during times of need.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness is comprised of 16 local, state and federal agencies and organizations. For additional information on winter weather safety and severe weather preparedness, visit OCSWA’s website: [www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov).

[NOAA’s U.S. Winter Outlook](#)

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