

HOW MY COMMUNITY IS PREPARING FOR

WINTER WEATHER



WHAT IS IT?

Winter weather can include blizzards, blowing snow, snow squalls, snow showers and flurries. Ice storms may also occur. Elements of a severe winter storm may include snow, ice, freezing rain, sleet or extremely cold temperatures, or a combination of these conditions. The specific nature of a severe winter storm is determined by the amount and extent of snow and/or ice; air temperature and wind chill; wind speed and direction; and the duration of the event.

WHEN DOES IT OCCUR?

Greater Kansas City typically experiences one or more types of severe winter weather each year. Severe winter weather is most likely during the months of December, January and February, but it is possible for winter weather to affect the region as early as October or as late as March.

WHERE DOES IT OCCUR?

Although annual snowfall in the Kansas City area is typically moderate — around 20 inches — severe winter weather may affect any part of Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte and Ray counties.

CORRESPONDING HAZARDS



About 70 percent of injuries related to ice and snow are the result of vehicle accidents. Icy or snow-covered roads, or roads blocked by downed tree limbs or power lines, may also inhibit the ability of emergency services and medical personnel to reach people.

DAMAGE TYPE & SEVERITY

Fallen trees and downed power lines are common results of severe winter weather. By damaging property, hampering transportation and disrupting utility services, severe winter weather can have an adverse impact on the local economy. The most direct causes of injuries and death from severe winter weather are frostbite and hypothermia.

VULNERABLE AREAS



- Residential and commercial property
- Transportation infrastructure and services
- Above-ground power and telecommunications lines

COMMUNITIES	ACTION
	1. Adopt ordinances/regulations requiring new electric and telecommunications transmission lines to be placed underground.
	2. Offer incentives to utility providers to replace existing above-ground utility lines with underground utility lines.
	3. Budget to gradually replace existing above-ground utility lines with underground lines.
	4. Partner with MARC, the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and others to inventory public, private and nonprofit facilities that have generators or emergency power and can be used as shelters in the event of severe winter weather.
	5. Retrofit existing facilities with generators for emergencies.
	6. Consider the adoption of policies requiring generators or other emergency power systems in the construction of new public facilities.
	7. Partner with community service organizations to provide materials and volunteer labor to assist at-risk groups, low-income residents and the elderly with winterizing their homes.

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COMMUNITIES	ACTION
	8. Work with utility providers to develop and implement programs to reduce, eliminate or defer home heating costs for elderly, low-income and at-risk residents.
	9. Budget for the stockpiling of sand, salt and other materials necessary to reduce or eliminate ice on roadways and improve road conditions.
	10. Work with local governments and MARC to develop a regional “pool” of sand, salt and other materials necessary to reduce or eliminate ice on roadways.
	11. Partner with local governments to establish a mutual aid system for sand, salt and other materials and their delivery resources (trucks, crews, etc.).
	12. Develop and implement “snow day” plans and policies for nonessential personnel and encourage private sector and nonprofit employers in the community to do the same.
	13. Develop and conduct a public education and awareness campaign on properly winterizing homes.
	14. Collect and disseminate public education materials that address winter weather safety and preparedness.
	15. Provide vulnerable populations with winter weather safety, preparedness and mitigation information.
	16. Partner with emergency services, public health and community groups to conduct special public education events, such as a Severe Winter Weather Awareness Day.

