



Navajo Nation
Division of Health
Public Health Preparedness Program

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Winter Preparedness

Listen to your local radio station or TV weather and weather channels for information daily. Weather effects are different all across the Navajo Nation. There may be deep snow in the mountainous regions to little or no snow in other areas. Low lying flood prone areas experience flooding from run offs and snowmelt. If you live along rivers such as the Little Colorado River, San Juan River or in Chinle Valley you can expect increased water flow from run offs and precipitation at higher elevations. Be aware and alert to weather conditions. BE PREPARED!!!! Every family needs an emergency plan. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Remember weather conditions from last winter. Use prior experiences as lessons learned and have an informed approach to winter preparedness this winter.**
- **Get your annual flu shot. Follow prevention activities such as covering your cough and sneeze and discard used tissues properly. Wash your hands often. Stay home if you are ill with flu symptoms. Keep hand sanitizers and hand wipes handy.**
- **As a family activity, create a basic checklist for winter preparedness. You might begin with your vehicle. Check the tires, the battery, antifreeze, windshield wipers, winterize your vehicle as soon as possible.**
- **If you plan to travel during winter conditions make sure you have safety equipment in your vehicle: tire changing tools, check the spare tire to ensure it is in usable condition, a shovel, tire chains, flash light with batteries, cell phone with charger, blanket, matches, several pieces of dry firewood, gloves, an extra set of warm clothes including winter boots and socks, water, non-perishable food, medications if you take it frequently and an emergency medical kit, ...always travel with a companion. Getting started to work or on a trip early is often good practice when road conditions become a challenge.**
- **Identify a relative, friend, or community member to confirm your location when you travel for safety. Provide an estimated return time, date and route of travel.**

- **Keep a listing of emergency numbers, including towing service numbers.**
- **If you are stranded in winter conditions stay with your vehicle. If you are stranded by weather conditions at home, stay at home and use a red sign large enough to be seen from the air or from a distance.**
- **It's never too late to stock up on supplies such as non-perishable food, water, firewood and coal. Include infant supplies if you have a baby in the family. Make sure you have enough medication on hand. Keep oil lamps and batteries for flashlights handy incase of power outages.**
- **Winterize your home and help others such as the elderly to do the same.**
- **Winterize the heater and water heater and have gas lines checked.**
- **Update the smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Insert new batteries.**
- **Many times people practice healing ceremonies in their homes or in an enclosed space. Keep a window open or have the door slightly ajar for fresh air flow. Coals burning in an open space can create carbon monoxide. Even when you are sitting in a vehicle with the engine running, open the window just enough for fresh air, carbon monoxide can build up in a vehicle when the engine is running.**
- **Check with your local chapter in times of emergencies. The local chapter administration may be forming an emergency response team. They may be setting up a shelter, getting food and water ready. Work closely with your chapter officials. You may be able to assist as a volunteer.**
- **Each community should have an emergency plan. Every community should have updated information on people living in remote places. It is wise to do a community assessment now with mapping of residences using GPS incase air drops and deliveries are necessary. Update the previous plan to respond this winter. Always have a plan B incase the major plan doesn't meet all needs. Remember all purchases and activities related to emergency response must be documented. Assessment forms are available through the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management.**
- **Chapters can also assist other chapters that need resources such as volunteers or equipment for short term or long term emergency response.**
- **Community members should assist neighbors during emergency situations. Check on your neighbors often.**
- **Plan ahead for family members that need special assistance such as dialysis or frequent visits to the hospital. They may need temporary shelter, a safe place throughout an emergency situation. An elderly person may need shelter at a nursing home for the winter season or may stay with relatives.**

- **Remember the neighbor that may not have transportation and need special assistance.**
- **If you have a Cell Phone, make sure it is charged and have the charger available at all times.**
- **Remember your animals. Most livestock can fend for themselves if they are not corralled. When you see the weather changing, round up the livestock, sheep, cattle, horses and move them to a safe area that is accessible. Keep small animals such as dogs and cats out of the weather in a comfortable place.**
- **Get livestock and pets vaccinated. Stock up on livestock feed and pet supplies while the weather is accommodating.**
- **Keep in mind that emergency response may be several hours or even a day...so be prepared.**

The Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management phone number is (928) 871-6892. The Navajo Division of Health-Health Education phone number is (928) 871- 6258 . The Navajo Veterinary and Livestock Program is (928) 871- 6615. Preparedness presentations are available upon request.

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