

CIVIL AIR PATROL – ARUNDEL COMPOSITE SQUADRON

MER-MD-023 (<http://arundel.mdwg.cap.gov>)

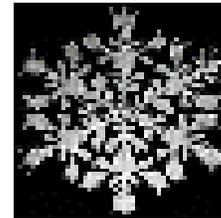
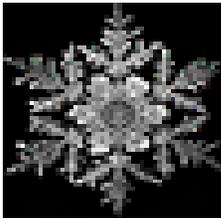
February 2005

SAFETY

WINTER SAFETY

The topic of last month's Safety Presentation was "Prevention and Treatment of Cold Weather Injuries". It was intended as a review for Ground Team training. The information presented in Civil Air Patrol's Ground and Urban Direction Finding Team Tasks Manual was used as reference material. This month's Safety Topic deals with Winter Safety. This presentation is more general in nature, and applies to everyday situations, rather than specifically to Ground Team training.

Winter is a beautiful season when Mother Nature rests, and prepares for the growing season that the spring thaw will bring. Winter, on the other hand, can also be dangerous for those who



do not take its occasional fury seriously. Let's start with some basic definitions of weather related hazards:

- Winter storm watch – be alert, a storm is likely
- Winter storm warning – take action, the storm is in or entering your area
- Blizzard warning – snow and strong winds combined will produce blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts, and life-threatening wind chill; seek refuge immediately
- Winter weather advisory – winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous, especially to motorists
- Frost/freeze warning – below freezing temperatures are expected and may cause damage to plants, crops, or fruit trees
- Flash flood warning – a flash flood is imminent; act quickly to save yourself because you may have only a very short time

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- **Flood warning – flooding has been reported or is imminent; take necessary precautions at once**

Safety tips for winter preparedness include:

Before Severe Weather Arrives:

- **Store drinking water, extra blankets, 1st-aid kit, canned/no-cook food, non-electric can opener, radio, flashlight, and extra batteries where you can get them easily, even in the dark.**
- **Keep cars and other vehicles fueled and in good repair, with winter emergency kit in each.**
- **Listen to weather radio often to monitor severe weather.**
- **Know safe routes from home, work, and school to high ground.**
- **Know how to contact other household members.**
- **Learn how to turn-off gas, electric power, and water, in case you need to evacuate your home.**
- **Keep plywood, plastic sheeting, lumber, sandbags, and hand tools accessible.**
- **Have extra blankets, snow shovel, and rock salt available.**
- **Stock-up on a few day's supply of water, non-perishable food, medication, candles and matches, and specialty items (i.e. diaper for infants).**



During a Winter Storm:

- **Conserve fuel by keeping your home cooler than normal; temporarily shut-off heat to less-used rooms.**
- **Avoid travel if possible; if you must travel, do so during daylight, stay on main roads, and keep others informed of your schedule.**
- **Monitor weather radio for updates and potential emergency instructions.**
- **If advised to evacuate, follow routes designated by local officials.**

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Clearing Snow and Ice:

- Dress warmly, paying special attention to feet, hands, nose, and ears.
- Avoid shoveling snow if you are out of shape, or if you have a history of heart trouble.
- Do light warm-up exercises before shoveling, and take frequent breaks.
- If possible, push snow in front of you; if you have to lift it, pick up small amounts, and lift with your legs and not your back; do not throw snow over your shoulder.
- Do not drink alcohol before or while shoveling snow; never smoke while shoveling.



- Use rock salt or de-icing compounds to remove ice from steps, walkways, or sidewalks; sand placed on walkways may also help prevent slipping.
- If you use a snow blower, make sure that you read the owner's manual, and know how to safely operate the equipment.



Driving Safely in Winter Weather:

- Snow, ice, and extreme cold can make driving treacherous. Before winter arrives, have your car tuned-up, check level of antifreeze, tire tread, and make sure that the battery is good.

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- Keep emergency gear in your car (cell phone; flashlight; extra batteries; jumper cables; sand or kitty litter for traction; ice scraper; windshield wash fluid; small shovel; blankets; and warning devices such as flares or reflectors).
- For long car trip, keep food, water, extra blankets, and required medication on hand.
- Avoid driving in snow or ice storms; if you must travel, drive slowly; let someone know the route that you are taking, and when you plan to arrive at your destination.
- If your car is parked outside, make sure that the exhaust pipe and the area around it is clear of snow.
- Don't sit in a parked car with the engine running, unless a window is open (window should be facing away from the wind).
- If your car stalls or gets stuck in snow, light two flares and place one at each end of the car, a safe distance away. You can also set your hazard light to flashing, and tie a "distress flag" to the radio aerial or window. Make sure that snow has not blocked the exhaust pipe. Then stay in your vehicle and open a window slightly to let in fresh air. Wrap yourself in a blanket and run the vehicle's heater for a few minutes every hour to keep warm. Remain in your vehicle; rescuers are most likely to find you there.

Walking in a Winter Wonderland:

- Dress in layers and wear boots with nonskid soles. Wear a bright scarf or hat or reflective gear so drivers can see you.



- Walk on sidewalks if possible. If you must walk on the street, then walk against the flow of traffic and as close to the curb as you can.
- Don't wear a hat or scarf that blocks your vision or makes it hard for you to see or hear the traffic.
- When traveling with babies or children, dress them in bright or reflective clothing. Always keep them in front of you.
- Before you step off the curb, make sure that oncoming cars and trucks have either passed or come to a complete stop.

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Safety First for Kids:

- The best way to stay safe in winter snowstorm or cold is to stay inside. Long periods of exposure to severe cold increases the risk of frostbite or hypothermia – remember what you learned during last month’s Safety Presentation!
- If you go outside, wear many layers of clothing, hat, and gloves.
- Come inside several times for warm-up breaks.
- If you start to shiver a lot, or get very tired, or if your nose, fingers, toes, or earlobes start to feel numb, or turn pale, go inside and tell an adult. These are signs of hypothermia and frostbite.

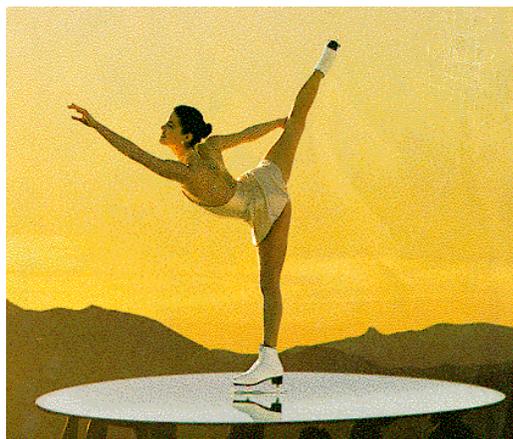


Safe Sledding:

- Never use streets or roads for sledding, unless they are blocked from traffic.
- Sled only during daytime hours, or if the place is lit by electric lights.
- Do not sled on icy hills. Sledding hills should be snow covered.
- Avoid sledding over snow bumps or anything that may cause the sled to be airborne.
- Do not sled alone, and stay out of the paths of other sleds.

Safe Skating:

- Try to skate at areas approved and posted for ice-skating.
- Never skate alone. Have at least two people present.
- Do not skate on a pond unsupervised. Remember that ice thickness is never consistent on lakes and ponds. Water current, especially around narrow spots, bridges, inlets and outlets are always suspect for thin ice.
- Stay away from cracks, seams, pressure ridges, slushy and darker areas that signify thinner ice.
- Do not skate in the dark.



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Protecting Pets:

- Ingesting anti-freeze can be fatal for your dog or cat. It has a sweet taste and even a tiny amount can cause severe kidney damage and even death. If you spill some, soak it up immediately (clay kitty litter works well; discard the litter once the anti-freeze has been absorbed).
- Pets that live outdoors should be fed a bit more in the winter because they need the extra calories to stay warm. They also should have fresh water put out a couple of times a day.
- If your pet goes outdoors, be aware of the temperature. Pets can get frostbite easily on their ears, tail, and paws.
- When walking your dog, check the paws to make sure that ice isn't building up between the toes and that salt from the road is not irritating the skin.
- If your dog is a swimmer, keep it on a leash around open water or unstable ice. Hypothermia can set in quickly, and the dog may be unable to get out of the water.
- Before you start your car, you should honk the horn to make sure that a cat hasn't decided to nap in a warm spot under the hood of the vehicle.
- If decorating for the holidays, keep ornaments out of the reach of your pets. Remember that poinsettias, holly, mistletoe, and other plants can be toxic if ingested.



The above presentation only briefly touches on the many topics that one should consider about winter safety. To find out more, read safety information from the references listed below:

Read More.....References:

1. <http://www.fema.gov>
2. <http://www.safeusa.org>
3. <http://www.redcross.org>
4. <http://www.nysemo.state.ny.us>
5. <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>
6. <http://www.nbc4.com>
7. <http://weathereye.kgan.com>