

Disaster Dispatch

Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management Newsletter
ISSUE 2: December 2016



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Awareness is Preparedness

December is here and this is the time to celebrate in holiday cheer! As millions of us gather decorations from garages, attics and shop holiday sales, it's important to remember that many of our favorite decorations carry the risk of fire or electrical injury if not used correctly. Don't let a preventable accident take the enjoyment out of your holidays. Keep in mind the following tips from cableorganizer.com

Lighting and Decorations

- Before you begin decorating, verify how many strands of lights are safe to connect end-to-end. For example, maximum of 210 watts can be connected when using 22 gauge wire, and a maximum of 420 watts can be connected when using 20 gauge wiring.
- Use lights and decorations that are rated for outdoor use. Putting indoor-only products outside in the weather can result in electric shock and fire hazards.
- Always turn off Christmas lights and decorations before going to bed or leaving the house.

Christmas Trees

- Before taking a Christmas tree home, make sure that its needles are fresh, green, and firmly attached to the branches.
- Consider a Christmas tree with thicker needles, they take longer to dry out.
- Before putting your new Christmas tree into its stand, cut off several of inches from the bottom of the trunk to expose fresh wood.
- A fresh cut tree should hold at least one gallon of water. Be sure to water your tree daily to avoid it drying out.

Space Heaters

- Have a 3 feet "kid free zone".
- Keep all flammable items such as Christmas trees, blankets, paper, wood, etc. 3 feet away in all directions from space heaters.
- Always turn off heater before leaving to room.
- Use the appropriate fuel, if using fuel burning space heaters.
- Place heater on a flat surface.
- If buying electric space heaters, buy one that automatically shuts off.
- If you smell gas, (for fuel burning heaters), turn off the heater and open the windows.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

A Message from the Director

Anne Arundel County experiences a variety of winter weather, especially snow and ice. Commuting to and from work in winter weather, and travel during the holidays requires extra consideration and preparation. The staff at the Office of Emergency Management, encourages all residents to prepare their vehicles for inclement weather. Preparing or re-supplying your vehicle emergency kit and reviewing winter weather driving safety tips, which are listed below will assist you in becoming a prepared driver. Weather disasters can't be prevented, but the more we educate others about preparedness, the better the chances of preventing loss of life and property damage.

Winter Vehicle Emergency Kit

- ⇒ Hand and feet warmers
- ⇒ Gloves, Hats, Scarves and Boots
- ⇒ Blanket
- ⇒ First aid kit
- ⇒ Jumper cables
- ⇒ Windshield ice scraper
- ⇒ Non-Perishable snacks/ water
- ⇒ Map
- ⇒ Flashlight/ batteries
- ⇒ Cell phone/ portable charger
- ⇒ Shovel
- ⇒ Tow chains/Tire chains
- ⇒ Emergency flares
- ⇒ Salt or cat litter for traction

Think Safe; Think Road Safety!

Before Driving you want to take the following steps when snow or ice is on the ground:

- ⇒ Immediately put on your seatbelt
- ⇒ Remove snow and ice from entire vehicle; snow left on car can be hazardous to you and other drivers
- ⇒ Ensure headlights and taillights are working properly
- ⇒ Ensure windshield wipers efficiently work and rubber blades are not dull or worn down
- ⇒ Use non-freezing windshield wiper fluid
- ⇒ Make sure your vehicle's battery does not need to be replaced.
- ⇒ Ensure tires have efficient traction and are inflated to recommended pressure

During your drive, take the following steps:

- ⇒ Avoid sudden braking; when breaking softly press on the break to avoid skidding
- ⇒ Increase distance between you and the car in front of you to avoid accidents
- ⇒ Do not use cruise control during any inclement weather
- ⇒ Allow longer travel time
- ⇒ Always use turn signals
- ⇒ Stay alert; do not drive if fatigued, been drinking, or talking/texting on the phone

If **Stranded or Stuck** in your vehicle:

- ⇒ Turn on emergency flashers (two-way lights)
- ⇒ Stay inside your vehicle with your seat belt fastened
- ⇒ Ensure your tailpipe is not stuck in snow; this could allow carbon monoxide to build up, and lead to exposure and even death
- ⇒ Call for help (911 in an emergency, or roadside assistance if no one is injured or ill)
- ⇒ Use emergency kit if needed

Sincerely,
Kevin Aftung



J. Kevin Aftung
Director

Important Numbers

****For Emergency Situations
Call 911****

Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE)
877-778-2222

**AACO Police Department
(non-emergency use only)**
410-222-8050

**AACO Fire Department
(non-emergency use only)**
410-222-8200

**AACO Office of Emergency
Management**
410-222-0600

**City of Annapolis Emergency
Management**
410-216-9167

AACO Public Works
410-222-4040

AACO Inspections and Permits
410-222-7790

AACO Public Schools
410-222-5000

Verizon
410-954-6260

Social Media

Facebook - [Anne Arundel County OEM](#)

Twitter - [AACO_OEM](#)

Winter Storm Preparedness

Knowing your actions before, during, and after a storm disaster could impact you and your family in a positive way! The following are steps you should take before, during and after a winter storm.

Before Snowstorm:

- ⇒ Before winter approaches, make sure that your emergency kit caters to the weather. For example, during winter you want to make sure you have items that will be helpful in cold weather and that are also efficient. Such as, shovels, salt, blankets, water, and hand and feet warmers.
- ⇒ Make a Family Communications Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- ⇒ A National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio broadcasts alerts and warnings directly from the National Weather Service for all hazards. You may also sign up in advance to receive notifications from your local emergency services. If you don't have a NOAA radio, keep a battery operated radio or hand crank radio handy to continue to gain updated information from local radio stations.
- ⇒ Minimize travel.
- ⇒ Winterize your house. Make sure the structure of the house can hold up heavy weight from wet snow, keep fire extinguishers handy— winter is when house fires usually occur, maintain chimneys, gutters and cut back tree branches.
- ⇒ Bring pets inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.
- ⇒ Park car in driveway if possible, if not follow posted signs for street parking in winter weather, leave all snow routes clear.
- ⇒ Make sure generators have enough gas.

During Snowstorm:

- ⇒ Staying indoors is the best option during snow storms.
- ⇒ Walk carefully on snowy, icy walkways.
- ⇒ Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack
- ⇒ Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat.
 - ⇒ Signs of Frostbite: Occurs when the skin and body tissue just beneath it freezes. Loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, earlobes, face, and the tip of the nose.
 - ⇒ Signs of Hypothermia: Dangerously low body temperature. Uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion.
- ⇒ Drive only if it is absolutely necessary. If you must drive: travel in the day, don't travel alone, keep others informed of your schedule, stay on main roads and avoid back road shortcuts.

After Snowstorm:

- ⇒ If your home loses power or heat for more than a few hours try to wait it out by adding layers of clothing, use spaces heaters or fireplace, and eat high calorie foods to raise internal temperature of your body. As a last resort, you may want to go to a nearby neighbor or family members house if you don't have access to these items.
- ⇒ Shovel out path for walkways and driveways.
- ⇒ Start generator if needed, but NEVER leave the generator running indoors. This can produce toxic fumes in your home.
- ⇒ Restock your emergency supplies in case another storm hits.
- ⇒ Check your home for any outside damages.



Winter Storm Terms

Black Ice: A thin coating of ice found on roads and sidewalks that is difficult to see

Nor'easter: Winds blow from the northeast direction, this often brings heavy snow and very strong winds

Sleet: A mixture of snow and rain

Flurries: Very light snowfall

Frost: A thin layer of ice crystals that form on a frozen surface like grass or a car

Blizzard: A combination of blowing snow and wind resulting in very low visibilities. Heavy snowfalls and severe cold often accompany blizzards

Wind Chill: Bitter cold air that makes the temperature feel much colder than the thermometer reads

Passable: Where one travel lane is accessible with front-wheel drive cars

Bare Pavement: Where the snowed has been plowed and the pavement is exposed

Winter Storm Watch: Potential for significant and hazardous winter weather within 48 hours

Winter Storm Advisory: When 2 to 4 inches of snow, alone or in combination with sleet and freezing rain, is expected to cause a significant inconvenience

Winter Storm Warning: A significant combination of hazardous winter weather is occurring or imminent



Training/Meeting Schedule

Local Emergency Planning Committee

December 15, 2016

9:00 AM—10:00 AM

Contact Chrissy Calp at emcalp00@aacounty.org or 410-222-0605 to register

December Exercise

December 16, 2016

9:00 AM– 11:30 AM

Contact Teresa Chapman at emchap00@aacounty.org or 410-222-0606 for any further questions.

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