

## WINTER STORM

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**DEFINITION** – Winter storms may include snow, sleet, freezing rain, or a mix of these wintry forms of precipitation. A winter storm can range from a moderate snowfall or ice event over a period of a few hours to blizzard conditions with wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by low temperatures and heavy and/or blowing snow, which can severely impair visibility and disrupt transportation. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has a long history of severe winter weather. (NOAA, 2009).



### MITIGATION ACTIONS FOR RESIDENTS

- ▶ **Personal Preparedness** – It is important to plan for disasters. Families may not be together or at home. Consider completing the following to be prepared.
  - **Family Emergency Communication Plan** (FEMA) serves as a comprehensive checklist for household disaster preparedness. [FEMA Family Emergency Communication Plan Checklist](#)
  - **Family Disaster Plan** (American Red Cross) – Communication networks and electricity could be disrupted. Planning in advance will help ensure that all the members of your household know how to reach each other and where to meet up in an emergency. [American Red Cross Family Disaster Plan Template](#)
  - **Emergency Kits** – It is always a good idea to have an emergency kit on hand. Consider basic items as well as special needs.  
 Build a Kit (Ready.gov) [ready.gov Build-a-Kit](#)  
 Survival Kit Supplies (American Red Cross) [American Red Cross Survival Kit Supplies Checklist](#)
- ▶ **Emergency Alerts and Warnings** – To receive emergency alerts and warnings, refer to the following websites, mobile apps, and other resources.
  - **American Red Cross Mobile Apps** (Apple App Store, Google Play, or text to “90999” [Mobile Apps - The American Red Cross](#)
  - **South Central Alert** – This service allows residents and businesses in an eight county area to be notified of an emergency situation and important alert messages in a variety of ways, including on their cell phones, home and work phones, by text messaging and e-mail. [South Central Alert - Sign Up](#)
  - Monitor police news feeds, weather, and news on social media or websites. Receiving periodic updates is vital.
- ▶ **Personal and Family Preparation** – FEMA offers a wide range of suggestions for [winter storm preparation](#).

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### MITIGATION ACTIONS FOR MUNICIPALITIES

- ▶ **Adopt the York County Hazard Mitigation Plan** by resolution or develop and implement a municipal hazard mitigation plan. [York County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#)
- ▶ **Prepare a Continuity of Operations Plan** to ensure that essential functions continue to be performed under a broad range of circumstances, protecting residents and minimizing business interruption. Consider what capital improvements are needed to adequately protect business or properties. [FEMA Continuity of Operations Brochure](#)
- ▶ **Prepare an Emergency Operations Plan** which describe who will do what, as well as when, with what resources, and by what authority – before, during, and immediately after an emergency. [FEMA Guide for All Hazards Emergency Operations Planning Guide](#)
- ▶ **Coordination** – Develop pre-disaster Memorandums of Agreements or Memorandum of Understanding with adjacent jurisdictions. Build partnerships (neighborhoods, emergency management/first responders, businesses, utility service providers, and local government agencies to strengthen response and recovery.
- ▶ **Public Education and Outreach** – Facilitate funding for mitigation measures and technical assistance programs that address measures that citizens can take. Educate residents regarding risk and impact of hazards, how to prepare and protect themselves and their property. Public awareness and education can include:
  - Informing public about impacts of severe winter weather;
  - Distributing family and traveler emergency preparedness information;
  - Encouraging the use of carbon monoxide detectors; and
  - Educating residents regarding proper ventilation.
- ▶ **Protecting Power Lines** – Burying or otherwise protecting electric and other utility lines can prevent utility disruption by protecting lines from ice, wind or snow damage. Nevertheless, lines buried in frozen soil may be difficult to reach if repair is necessary. Additionally, establishing standards for tree pruning can help protect power lines.
- ▶ **Code Enforcement and Building Maintenance** – Local governments can impact building/site design through building code enforcement of snow-related ordinances such as snow loads, roof slope, snow removal, and storage. Communities can also monitor snow amounts to provide site specific snow load data.
- ▶ **Reducing Roadway Impacts** – Strategies to lesson roadway impacts include:
  - Maintaining adequate road and debris clearing capabilities; and

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- Using Snow fencing or living snow fencing (rows of trees) to limit blowing and drifting of snow.
- ▶ **Vulnerable Populations** – Identifying and organizing outreach to vulnerable populations. Establishing and promoting accessible heating centers in the community.