



Emergency Management

500 N. Main St., Suite 809 • Monroe, NC 28112 • Phone (704)283-3575 • Fax (704)283-3716

News Release

Union County Emergency Management Urges Residents to Take Steps to Prepare for Winter Weather

November 23, 2015, Monroe, NC – As part of Winter Weather Awareness Week, Nov. 29 – Dec. 5, Union County Emergency Management urges residents of Union County to update their emergency plans and stock their emergency supplies kits.

“With predictions of more precipitation this winter because of El Nino, Union County residents should take the time to plan for winter now,” said Emergency Manager Donald Moye. “North Carolina winters are unpredictable. Earlier this year, much of the state had saw some form of frozen precipitation whether it was snow, sleet or ice. Union County residents shouldn’t take any chances. It’s better to prepare for the worse than to be surprised and facing a dangerous situation.”

Moye adds that making an emergency plan, practicing it, having an emergency supplies kit and staying informed to changing weather conditions will keep residents and their loved ones safe. He encourages people to listen carefully to their National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio, local radio and television stations for storm watches or warnings.

“When winter weather warnings are issued, be prepared for possible power outages or roads made impassable by snow or ice,” he said.

Moye reminds residents to practice the following winter safety tips:

- Keep alternative heating sources prepared. If you have a fireplace, store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood. Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure your family knows how to use them.
- Properly vent kerosene heaters and keep any electric generators OUTSIDE and away from any open windows or doors to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Also, do not burn charcoal indoors. Carbon monoxide poisoning can result from charcoal fumes indoors.
- Keep fresh batteries on hand to use with flashlights and weather radios.
- Always keep at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food in your home.
- Wear multiple layers of thin clothing instead of a single layer of thick clothing to stay warm. You will be warmer and, as the temperature changes, you can easily remove layers to remain comfortable.
- If you must travel during a winter storm, store an emergency kit in your vehicle that includes: blankets, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries, a first aid kit, a flashlight with extra batteries, battery booster cables and flares, a tire repair kit and pump, a road



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map, a sack of cat litter (for tire traction), a tow rope, bottled water and non-perishable high-energy foods such as granola bars, extra clothing to keep dry, and a windshield scraper and brush.

“Most deaths attributed to winter storms result from indirect dangers such as traffic accidents, falling trees, downed power lines, house fires and carbon monoxide poisoning resulting from improper use of space heaters, grills and stoves,” said Moye.

For those who may need assistance heating their homes this winter, Union County, through the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, administers the federally-funded Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) that provides a one-time vendor payment to help eligible households pay their heating bills during the cold-weather months. Citizens interested in applying need to be aware of the application process and eligibility requirements for the LIEAP benefit. Eligible households containing a person aged 60 and above, or at least one disabled person (receiving SSI, SSA or VA disability) receiving services through the Division of Aging and Adult Services can begin applying Dec. 1. For more information, contact the Union County Division of Social Services at 704-296-4300.

As a reminder, if driving on snow-or ice-covered roadways, reduce your speed. Driving at the regular speed limit will reduce your ability to control the car if you begin to slide. Leave plenty of room between you and other vehicles. If conditions worsen and you can no longer drive safely, pull off the highway. Stay calm and remain in your vehicle. Do not set out on foot unless you can see a building close by where you know you can take shelter.

For more information about how to be ready for winter weather, go to: www.readync.org or download North Carolina Emergency Management’s free ReadyNC mobile app, which provides real-time traffic and weather plus open shelters and items needed in an emergency supplies kit.