

# Winter storm preparation

**Publisher's Note:** *The following information is provided by Placer County.*

Northern California's first big storm slammed the region Oct. 13 and gave residents a warning: winter is here. Thousands of Placer County residents lost power when this system hit. Were you prepared?

Every family and home should be prepared to handle a local disaster and have the resources to survive at least three days without services.

"From our homes along the valley floor to the crest of Sierra, we've seen our share of disasters – wildfires, flooding, powerful winter storms, heavy snow, back-country avalanches, power outages and high winds. We should expect them," said Rui Cunha, Director of Office of Emergency Services.

Let this early winter storm be a reminder that we all need to create a family readiness plan. Talk to your children about what to do in an emergency. Learn First Aid and CPR. You can register for classes with the American Red Cross at [www.sacsierraredcross.org](http://www.sacsierraredcross.org).

Before the next storm hits, the Office of Emergency Services offers a few hints to help prepare:

- 1) Buy and store an extra supply of drinking water. One gallon a day per person.
- 2) Have a 3-day supply of ready-to-eat nonperishable foods; a can opener, matches, knife, foil and plastic bags. Do NOT use outdoor cooking devices, such as barbecues.
- 3) Buy extra batteries and/or flashlights.
- 4) Before a storm hits, clear rain gutters, repair roof leaks

and cut away branches that could fall on your house or other structures during a storm. (Don't do these chores in the middle of a storm!)

5) Do you have a fire extinguisher? Do all family members know how to use it?

6) Pack a bag with medications, first-aid supplies, blankets, warm shoes and clothing, rain gear, toiletries and personal items, household tools, list of important phone numbers, and games/toys for the kids.

7) Plan ahead of time how you will handle your pets; food and water for pets and livestock.

8) Have a battery-operated TV or radio on hand.road failure

9) Check what you have lying around outside. Will a strong wind blow it away or cause damage?

10) Know the location and how to turn off water, power, propane and gas coming into your house.

11) Winterize your car. Keep half a tank of gas in the car, good tires and keep tools such as a shovel or scraper. Keep blankets in the car.

12) If you are exposed to freezing temperatures, remove wet clothing and immediately warm up with hot soup and a blanket. Avoid caffeine and alcohol.

13) Recognize symptoms of exposure: dizziness, exhaustion and shivering are signs of hypothermia. Skin discoloration and numbness are signs of frostbite.

Stay well informed. Turn on the radio or TV news or visit online media websites for emergency information, instruction or warnings.

For more information on preparedness, call the American Red

Cross at (530) 885.9392. You may also find preparedness information at the Placer County website at [www.placer.ca.gov](http://www.placer.ca.gov).