

Slew of warnings issued before storm arrives

In what is being called one of the worst storms in years is coming with a slew of warnings – from the National Weather Service, departments of transportation, law enforcement, utilities and others.

A winter storm warning has been issued by the NWS in Reno for the Lake Tahoe Basin for a 24-hour period starting 1pm Thursday. Rain will be followed by snow. Up to 3 feet is forecast at upper elevations, with 7-14 inches below 7,000 feet, with up to 24 inches along Highway 89.

Winds are expected to be wicked – with ridge tops seeing 100 mph. Sustained wind of 15 to 25 mph is expected at lake level, with gusts up to 45 mph.

Blizzard conditions are expected on roads in the Sierra. Up-to-date road conditions may be found on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News* by clicking on the state icons on the home page.

Caltrans has mobilized more than 1,500 pieces of storm-related equipment and has 3,000 maintenance employees ready for this week's storm.

Here are various warnings and tips:

Liberty Utilities

- Always keep a flashlight and extra batteries handy.
- Do not use candles in a power outage or other emergency. Camp lights and lanterns may also be useful; however, do not use kerosene lanterns indoors unless you have proper ventilation.
- Turn off or disconnect any appliances or electronics you

were using when the power went out. Unplug your computer to avoid the possibility of surge damage when the power returns. Always use a surge protector for valuable electronic equipment, and you may want to purchase an uninterruptable power supply. A UPS is a battery back-up system that supplies power for about 15 minutes – long enough for you to save all work and shut the computer down.

- Leave one light turned on so you'll know when your power returns.
- If you're cold, put on layers of warm clothing. Never burn charcoal for heating or cooking indoors. Close doors to unused rooms. Use wood-burning fireplaces if available, but ensure the flume is open.
- Leave the doors of your refrigerator and freezer closed as much as possible. Cover a stand-alone freezer with blankets, quilts or sleeping bags to further insulate it and help keep food frozen. Transfer refrigerated food to ice chests filled with ice if outage is prolonged.

Northstar Fire Department

- While no flooding in the Northstar area is expected, if the need for sand bags should arise, contact the fire department at 530.562.1212, ext. 4.
- Wind will impact high-profile vehicles on roads, cause some power outages and trees down, and cause untied objects such as trash cans, deck furniture, and Christmas decorations to become airborne.
- Some creeks and rivers may rise.

Caltrans and NDOT

- Check antifreeze level and make sure it is properly filled and formulated for winter temperatures.

- Check tire pressure and tread.
- Replace the wiper blades and fill the windshield wiper fluid reservoir; be sure to use a winter formula to help de-ice windshields.
- Carry tire chains that are the correct size for your tires, in good working order and practice installing the chains before needing to use them.
- Have a full tank of fuel before traveling.
- Have blankets, extra clothing, food and water, towels, a shovel, a flashlight, an ice scraper, a small bag of sand or kitty litter and road flares.
- When traveling with children, carry small activity packs for them to help prevent driver distractions.
- Have a fully charged cell phone before leaving and carry a car charger.
- Reduce speeds during winter weather and allow for additional stopping time.
- Turn on headlights to see and be seen.
- Turn off cruise control.
- Avoid quick starts, stops and fast turns. Accelerate, brake and steer smoothly and gradually.
- Keep additional distance from other vehicles.
- Watch carefully for snow removal equipment and don't crowd the plow. Only pass snow removal vehicles when a safe, legal passing area is available and sight distance is good.
- Use extra caution on bridges, ramps, overpasses and shaded areas; they may freeze first.

- If your vehicle begins to skid, steer in the direction of slide and slowly remove your foot from accelerator.
- Share your travel itinerary so others know when to expect you.
- Remove snow and ice from all vehicle windows, mirrors, lights, turn signals and license plates.
- Buckle up.
- Avoid quick starts, stops and fast turns. Accelerate, brake and steer smoothly and gradually.
- Reduce speed. Speed limits are based on normal road and weather conditions, not winter road conditions.
- Do not slam on brakes. Apply steady pressure on ABS-equipped vehicles and pump the brakes if necessary on non-ABS vehicles.
- Use extra caution on bridges, ramps, overpasses and shaded areas- they may freeze first.
- Be aware of black ice.
- If parked or stuck in snow, leave window slightly cracked for ventilation and make sure vehicle exhaust system is clear of snow.
- Use caution when following, passing or approaching snow removal equipment. Drive a safe distance behind snowplows. Plows often travel slower than other vehicles to remove snow, apply sand and liquid anti-icers and assist stranded vehicles. Don't travel beside a snowplow.

Truckee Police Department

- Department of Public Works is running day and night snow removal crews. For questions about snow removal operations, call 530.582.7707.

- Sand bags are available free of charge at the U.S. Forest Service parking area located at 10811 Stockrest Springs Road and at Truckee Fire Station 92 at 11473 Donner Pass Road.

– *Compiled by Lake Tahoe News staff*