

How to survive getting stuck out in the snow and cold

By Paul McHugh, Sacramento Bee

I suspect Frosty the Snowman is not in truth a jolly, happy soul. Parts of him look stiffened by frostbite, others thoroughly deadened by hypothermia. He must've spent a cold night out. That could also explain his frozen grin and blank stare.

In a gift-giving season, we all should understand that the very best present we can ever hope to award our loved ones is making it back home – hopefully, with all our fingers and toes intact. That means taking steps to ensure we don't end up like Frosty.

Each winter, skiers and boarders duck under resort boundary ropes, and/or get disoriented and lost in whiteouts. Other folks, overly confident about the abilities of their SUVs, drive too far into places they should never go and bog down on remote roads.

But for people brought nose-to-nose with hostile winter conditions, a few simple measures could make all the difference between mild discomfort and full-scale disaster. Start off by admitting that it's indeed possible to have a problem. When you do, whether or not it turns into a major problem is largely up to you.

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