

## **Jackson County Department of Public Health**

Melissa McKnight  
Deputy Health Director  
828-587-8288

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### **HEALTH DEPARTMENT ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO PREPARE FOR WINTER WEATHER**

As Jackson and surrounding counties are recovering from a winter storm, the Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) would like to take the time to encourage residents to plan and prepare now for potentially dangerous winter weather.

According to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, North Carolina's unpredictable weather patterns can be attributed to the state's proximity to the Appalachian Mountains, Atlantic Ocean, Gulf Stream, and Gulf of Mexico. Each year there are fewer than 4 winter storms in the coastal counties, 6 to 12 winter storms in the Piedmont, and 12 or more winter storms in the mountains.

In a recent proclamation declaring December 2-8, 2018 as Winter Weather Preparedness Week, Governor Roy Cooper urged residents to monitor changing weather conditions by listening to local media and paying close attention to winter weather warnings. Remember, a Winter Storm Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for either heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain within 48 hours while a Winter Storm Warning is issued when at least 3 inches of snow and/or ice accumulations of  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches or more are likely within the next 24 hours. A Winter Weather Advisory is issued when 1 to 3 inches of snow or ice accumulations of less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches are expected within the next 24 hours, causing travel difficulties.

To prepare for winter weather, follow these steps:

- Always keep enough non-perishable food in your home for 3 days.
- Keep fresh batteries on hand for weather radios and flashlights.
- Dress warmly. Wear multiple layers of thin clothing instead of a single layer of thick clothing.
- Properly vent kerosene heaters and keep any electric generators outside and away from open windows or doors to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Never burn charcoal indoors.
- Use a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio to monitor for changing weather conditions.
- Keep alternative heating sources and fire extinguishers on hand. Be sure your family knows how to use them.
- Store an emergency kit in your vehicle. Include scraper, jumper cables, tow chain, sand/salt, blankets, flashlight, first aid kit, and road map.

If you must travel during bad weather, leave plenty of room between you and other vehicles and, if driving on snow- or ice-covered roadways, reduce your speed. If conditions worsen, pull off the highway and remain in your vehicle. Do not set out on foot unless you can see a building close by where you can take shelter.

Lastly, make sure you stay informed. Sign up for CodeRED, a reverse 911, through Jackson County Emergency Management. Signing up for CodeRED allows for notifications, including local alerts and emergency shelter information, to go straight to your phone and email. To sign up for CodeRED, visit <http://health.jacksonnc.org/preparedness>.

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