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November 20th is Winter Weather Awareness Day

NOVEMBER 20TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

November 20th is Winter Weather Awareness Day

*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Missouri - As cold temperatures return to the state, it is important for Missourians to plan for the threat of severe winter storms and the dangers these storms can pose.

To help get ready, the National Weather Service, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, the State Emergency Management Agency and Missouri's local emergency managers are joining forces to promote **Nov. 20 as Winter Weather Awareness Day in Missouri.**

Because Missouri's winter weather can be difficult to predict and can quickly become severe, people are encouraged to begin preparing now, before winter sets in. Among the preparations Missourians can make are:

- Creating a family emergency plan and an emergency kit with bottled water and food that can be prepared without cooking in case of a power outage. Kits should include bottled water, canned and dry foods, battery-powered radio, flashlights, extra batteries, manual can opener and a first-aid kit.
- Making sure all heat sources, such as fireplaces, woodstoves and oil heaters function properly. If you have a generator, make sure you have fuel and that your

generator functions properly. Only operate generators outdoors.

- Creating a winter car kit. This includes a blanket, spare radio with batteries, snacks or energy-type food, jumper cables, flares, shovel and sand or shingles to give tires traction.
- Exercising caution when shoveling snow or pushing a car out of snow banks and avoiding unnecessary travel when driving conditions are poor.
- Making sure cell phones are charged before driving in foul winter weather and ensuring that important emergency numbers, such as *55 for the Missouri State Highway Patrol, are saved for fast dialing in case of emergencies on state highways.

It is also important for people to stay current on weather forecasts and to understand key National Weather Service terms:

- Winter Storm Watch indicates that severe winter weather may affect your area within 12-48 hours.
- Winter Storm Warning indicates severe winter weather is in the area or expected immediately and can be life threatening.
- Ice Storm Warnings are issued for ice accumulations of a quarter-inch or more.

Additional information about winter weather and preparedness tips can be found at the following Web sites:

- National Weather Service - St. Louis Winter Weather Awareness Page: www.crh.noaa.gov
- SEMA: www.sema.dps.mo.gov (Click on “Severe Winter Weather” in the “Plan and Prepare” section.)
- Missouri Dept. of Transportation's Travel Information Map: www.modot.mo.gov
- Missouri Ready in 3 Program's Weather Preparedness Page: <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/weather.php>
- Missouri Ready in 3 Program also provides free family safety guides to help prepare your family and household:

<http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/pdf/familyguideenglish.pdf>, or call (573) 526-4768 to order a free family safety guide. The family safety guide is available in several languages.

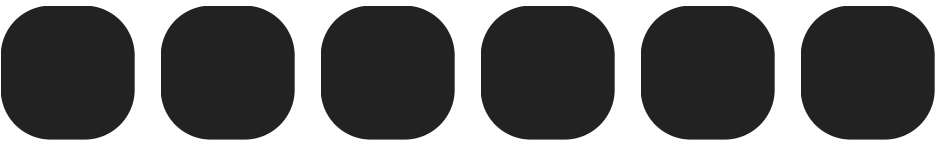
You may contact your local NWS office for interviews about Winter Weather Awareness Day or for additional information:

St. Louis: (636) 441-8467 Kansas City: (816) 540-6021 Springfield: (417) 869-4491 Paducah, Ky: (602) 744-6424

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