

Ready PA *monthly*

✓ Be informed. ✓ Be prepared. ✓ Be involved

A Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) digital newsletter

January 2021

5 Ways to Be Prepared in the New Year

Still trying to think of a New Year's resolution that you can actually stick with? One that benefits you and your loved ones' health and safety?

Resolve to be ready!

Being prepared for emergencies is good for everyone – yourself, friends and family, and your community.

[Learn five easy things](#) you can do to be more prepared in 2021.



[READ MORE](#)

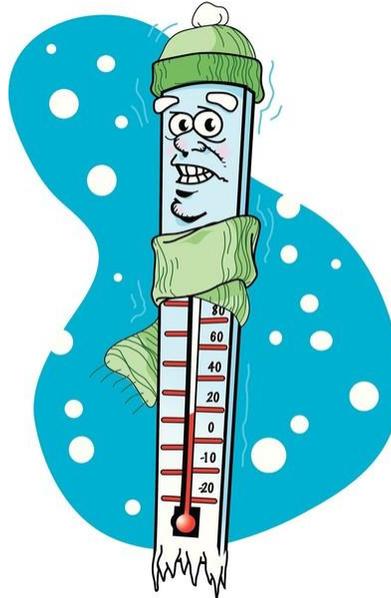
Chilling Dangers of Cold Weather

We are slip, sliding into the coldest months of the year on average. Some of the coldest weather experienced in Pennsylvania has occurred in January and February.

Nearly 120 years ago, Smethport McKean County had a thermometer drop out to 42 degrees...below zero...that is! Yeah, a negative 42-degree day on January 5, 1904. Brrrr!

While we don't often hit those extremes, it doesn't take extreme cold to run into cold air exposure hazards in the commonwealth. On cold days, follow these tips to be prepared:

- **Layer Up!** Wearing layers is an effective way to insulate your body from the cold.
- **Hats On!** Most of the body's heat escapes from the head, so cover that noggin!
- **Mittens Matter!** To keep your hands warmer, keep your fingers together in mittens instead of gloves.
- **Break It Up!** Make sure you take a break to warm up, reducing your risk for hypothermia or frostbite.
- **Stay Dry!** Getting wet in cold air can lead to a more rapid route to hypothermia.



At home, seal up windows and doors, insulate exposed pipes, and on the coldest days, let the faucets drip to keep water flowing in pipes to prevent freezing.

Winter storms can occur anywhere and bring freezing rain, ice, snow, high winds, or a combination of all these conditions. It's important to be prepared for winter weather. Stay safe and healthy when temperatures start to fall.

Get to Know Your Terms

A **Winter Weather Advisory** is when wintry weather is expected; exercise caution. Light amounts of wintry precipitation or patchy blowing snow will cause slick conditions and could affect travel if precautions are not taken.

A **Winter Storm Watch** is when snow, sleet, or ice is possible, be prepared! Confidence is medium that a winter storm could produce heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain and cause significant impacts.

A **Winter Storm Warning** is when snow, sleet, or ice is expected. Confidence is high that a winter storm will produce heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain and cause significant impacts.

For more information, visit [Ready PA](#) or the [National Weather Service](#).

Winter Weather Pet Preparedness

Don't forget to protect your pets from cold air exposure. Despite the fur, they too need a warm place to stay. Remember, if it's too cold for you, it's probably too cold for your pet, so keep your animals inside.

Follow these tips from the [Humane Society of the United States](#) to keep your pets safe and comfortable during winter weather.



- Keep your pets inside with you. Cats should not be left outdoors, even if they roam outside during other seasons. Dogs are happy with frequent walks and being kept inside the rest of the time.
- Just like us, windchill can threaten your pet's life. Exposed skin, ears, and paw pads are at risk for frostbite and hypothermia during extreme cold. Most dogs feel more comfortable wearing a sweater.
- After walks, wipe all paws with a damp towel before your pet licks them. Products such as rock salt used to melt snow and ice can irritate paw pads and their mouth.

The [ASPCA](#) also provides tips to prevent winter weather from affecting your pet's health.

- Coming out of the cold into the dry heat of your home can cause itchy, flaking skin. Towel dry your pet as soon as they come inside, especially your pet's feet and in between their paw pads.
- Never shave your dog down to the skin in the winter. The longer their coat is, the warmer they will be.
- Try to avoid bath time for your pet during cold spells. Washing too often can remove essential oils and increase the chance of developing dry, flaky skin.
- During the wintertime, pets burn extra energy by trying to stay warm. Feeding your pet a little bit more during winter weather can provide much-needed calories. Make sure there is fresh water to keep them hydrated and their skin moisturized.
- **DO NOT** leave your pets alone in a car during winter weather. During the winter, cars can act as refrigerators that hold in the cold and cause animals to freeze to death.

Winter weather is the perfect time to cuddle up with your pet. A cozy dog or cat bed with a blanket is a perfect way to keep your pet safe during winter weather.

Sign Up for Alerts

To help make decisions regarding winter travel, motorists are encouraged to "Know Before You Go" by checking conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles, including color-coded winter conditions on 2,900 miles, by visiting 511PA.

511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information, and access to more than 1,000 traffic cameras. Users can also see plow truck statuses and travel alerts along a specific route using the "Check My Route" tool. Motorists can sign-up for alerts on 511PA by clicking on "Personal Alerts" in the left-hand menu.

511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional Twitter alerts accessible on the [511PA website](http://511PA). Restrictions will be communicated via variable message boards, the 511PA traveler information website and smartphone apps.

Remember! You can also download the COVID Alert PA app and make your phone part of the fight. The free app can be found in the [Google Play Store](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.pennsylvania.511pa) and the [Apple App Store](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/covid-alert-pa/id1511111111) by searching for "covid alert pa." Getting timely alerts can help you get advice on how to help yourself and protect others as well as determine when to get testing. It can help reduce your risk of unknowingly spreading the virus to your friends, family, and community.

Celebrate Groundhog Day Safely

Stay home, Groundhogs! Yes, Punxsutawney Phil will still be predicting the weather while practicing social distancing guidelines. Phil's proclamation will be translated to the world.

Will it be six more weeks of winter or early springtime skies?



511 DOWNLOAD 511PA APP

Travel Info On The Go

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- Check Road Conditions
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www.511pa.com



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The banner features a dark blue background with the 511 logo and the text 'DOWNLOAD 511PA APP'. Below this, the heading 'Travel Info On The Go' is followed by three icons and their corresponding functions: a water drop for 'Check Weather Forecast', a steering wheel for 'Check Road Conditions', and a camera for 'View Traffic Cameras'. The website 'www.511pa.com' is listed. To the right, a smartphone displays the app's main menu with options like 'Driving Mode', 'Traffic Map', 'More Features', and 'Settings'. At the bottom left, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation logo is visible.



[JANUARY TIP SHEET: DANGERS OF COLD WEATHER](#)

[JANUARY SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT](#)

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