



External Affairs
Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency

Press Release

State Urges Rhode Islanders to Prepare for Weekend Winter Storm

Cranston, RI - The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) is alerting all Rhode Islanders that the National Weather Service has issued a Winter Storm Watch for Newport and Washington Counties to be in effect Saturday morning, January 23, until Sunday morning, January 24.

“My number one priority as Governor is keeping everyone safe, and I am monitoring winter weather closely in coordination with our state agencies,” said Governor Raimondo. “With snow and winds expected this weekend, I want to remind all Rhode Islanders to prepare for any potential power outages, make a family communications plan, and check on loved ones and neighbors who may need help. As you make weekend plans, please be sure to stay informed and watch news and social media closely for updates.”

“We could see heavy snow and very strong winds associated with the predicted winter storm,” said RIEMA Director Peter Gaynor. “Therefore we will be activating the State Emergency Operations Center in a monitoring capacity beginning Saturday morning in an effort to coordinate with state agencies and local emergency management directors and, if needed, respond to incidents due to the storm. We will also continue to receive updates from the National Weather Service. For additional information visit the RIEMA website at www.riema.ri.gov or follow us on Facebook and Twitter for situational updates and preparedness information.”

TIMING: Snow beginning early morning Saturday between 7-9 AM and coming to an end Sunday morning, between 5-8 AM. Additionally, a High Wind Watch is issued for Block Island to be in effect Saturday afternoon through Sunday morning.

ACCUMULATIONS: Snow accumulations of 5-7 inches are predicted for Southern Rhode Island (Newport, Washington Counties). Central Rhode Island is expected to receive 3-5 inches, while Northern Rhode Island could see 1-3 inches.

WINDS: Strong to damaging winds are expected to be associated with the storm. Southern Rhode Island could experience Northeast winds up to 45-50 mph, while winds of 25-35 mph are expected for the rest of the state.

TEMPERATURE: Temperature in the low 30's expected to drop into the upper 20's Saturday evening.

TRAVEL: Expect hazardous travel conditions, starting Saturday afternoon into the due to slick roadways and poor visibilities. As temperatures drop, road conditions may deteriorate as the precipitation freezes, creating icy roads in areas where the surface is exposed and not covered in snow.

General Winter Preparedness Tips:

- Develop a disaster-supply kit. Your kit should include the following basic items that you may need in the event of a disaster:
 - Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
 - Food, at least a three-day supply of non- perishable food
 - Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with extra batteries
 - Flashlight
 - First aid kit
 - Tools
 - Can opener for food
 - Prescription medications
 - Cash
 - Pet supplies
- Make a family emergency communications plan in case you are separated during an emergency. For more information visit www.riema.ri.gov/prepare
- Stay informed. Reliable, accurate information is an essential resource before, during, and after an emergency or disaster
- Have sufficient heating fuel, as regular sources may be cut off. Have emergency heating equipment and fuel (a gas fireplace, wood burning stove or fireplace) so you can keep at least one room livable. Be sure the room is well ventilated.
- Make sure smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are working properly and replace batteries as necessary
- Make sure your home is properly insulated. Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows to keep cold air out
- When the temperature is very low, freezing/bursting water pipes becomes an issue. Know how to shut off water valves and keep the heat on in your home. Even when you are absent, set the temperature to at least 55°F.
- Dressing in layers helps you retain heat. You can remove layers as needed if you become too warm.
- Use caution with portable space heaters - Heating equipment is the leading cause of home fires during the winter months, according to the National Fire Prevention Association. About two-thirds of home heating fire deaths are caused by portable or fixed space heaters.

Winter Vehicle Preparedness:

- Make an emergency supply kit for your vehicle, in addition to the emergency supply kit for your home. Include a shovel, jumper cables, and a bag of sand
- Plan long trips carefully, listening to the latest weather reports and road conditions
- Travel during the day, and if possible, try to take someone along with you
- Keep your gas tank full
- Install good winter tires with adequate tread
- Check your windshield wiper fluid

For additional information contact RIEMA at (401) 946-9996.

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