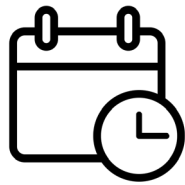


# PREPARING YOUR APARTMENT COMMUNITY FOR SEVERE WINTER WEATHER



Winter storms can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice and high winds. Utilities and communications services may be out for long periods of time.



Winter storms can last a few hours or several days, knocking out heat, power and communications services.



Winter storms put older adults, young children and sick individuals at greater risk.

**PLAN AHEAD**  
GENERAL EMERGENCY  
PREP CHECKLIST



**GATHER SUPPLIES**  
SUPPLY CHECKLIST



**COMMUNICATE**  
RESIDENT & MEDIA  
RELATIONS CHECKLIST



**SEVERE WINTER STORMS**  
SEVERE WINTER  
WEATHER CHECKLIST



**STAY SAFE**  
AFTER THE SEVERE WINTER  
STORM CHECKLIST

# PLAN AHEAD

## General Emergency Prep Checklist



Follow your company's emergency procedures. These tips are intended to supplement and reinforce your company's emergency guidelines.

*It's not possible to know when a disaster may strike, but having a plan in place may help you respond more effectively and quickly. Cooperate with first responders during any emergency. Follow your company's emergency procedures, and review plans regularly with your team to ensure all are familiar with your plans and to make any necessary updates or changes.*

- ☐ Complete an **Emergency Contacts List** including key onsite and corporate contacts, local utilities and emergency services, and vendors used. Keep it up to date.
- ☐ Keep an inventory of all furniture, office and other equipment, computers, tools, golf carts and anything else belonging to the property. Record serial numbers. Keep a copy in a safe location and have a copy offsite (or stored digitally) as well. Engrave property name on equipment when possible.
- ☐ Take photos of inventory items and keep those with the inventory.
- ☐ If possible, have a set of property plans that show the locations of all fire exits, firefighting equipment and alarm pulls, mechanical equipment, water and gas shutoffs, main electrical panels, elevators, roof access, standpipes, etc. and keep them on hand for emergency service providers. Plan to walk all units biannually.
- ☐ Label cables so equipment can be reconnected quickly after an emergency that may require moving it or disconnecting it.
- ☐ Make sure all staff know who the company's "go to" person is for an emergency, and how to contact that person. Each employee should have pre-assigned tasks in the event of an emergency, and property teams should practice for emergencies.
- ☐ Plan how to communicate clearly with all onsite staff during an emergency. Keep all employee and contractor numbers stored on one or more cellphones.
- ☐ Plan how to update the answering service, the property website and the voicemail greeting in the event of an emergency. Be sure the plan includes emergency instructions and information for residents.
- ☐ Use a **Supply Checklist** to be sure you have useful supplies on hand for an emergency.
- ☐ Have plans in place to access critical files during an emergency. Paper records can be at risk, and access to electronic records could be difficult if power is out. As a contingency, you can access documents signed through the *TAA Click & Lease* program—but this is not intended to replace a document management solution.
- ☐ Check resources like [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) and [www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html) for additional tips and suggestions.



### Don't forget!

In an emergency, call 911 first when it's clear help is needed. Then, notify your company's key emergency contact or supervisor.

# GATHER SUPPLIES

## Supply Checklist



Follow your company's emergency procedures. These tips are intended to supplement and reinforce your company's emergency guidelines.

*It's difficult to predict what may be needed to address a specific emergency. Having some of these supplies on hand should be generally useful, though. If your property is located along the coast or in an area that's prone to flooding, you'll want to adjust your supplies to include items that are useful in those situations. Refer to sites like [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) and [www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html) for more tips and suggestions, and follow your company's policies on preparing for emergencies.*

- ☐ Battery-powered radio, flashlights and extra batteries as needed
- ☐ Charging cords or additional batteries for cell phones, tablets and other devices
- ☐ Walkie-talkies or two-way radios
- ☐ Generator(s)
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Digital camera or cell phone that has a camera
- ☐ Tarps, plastic sheeting
- ☐ Sandbags
- ☐ Pumps for extracting water
- ☐ Sturdy shoes, work gloves, masks
- ☐ Hose
- ☐ Mops, brooms
- ☐ Carpet fan blowers
- ☐ Poster board and markers (to make signs as needed)
- ☐ Yellow caution tape and rope to cordon off dangerous areas
- ☐ Bottled water
- ☐ Extra clothes, blankets
- ☐ Canned food, can opener
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Cleaning supplies



### Don't forget!

When a dangerous weather event is forecast, check supplies on hand and replace or add to your stock as needed.

# COMMUNICATE

## Resident & Media Relations Checklist (Winter Weather)



Follow your company's emergency and communication procedures. These tips are intended to supplement and reinforce your company's emergency guidelines.

*Effective, time-sensitive communication is imperative before, during and after disasters and emergencies. Clear, factual and empathetic communication with other employees, supervisors, supplier partners and residents can minimize tensions and problems during a time of heightened stress. Follow your company's policies regarding communication with the media; know how you will reach out to appropriate spokespeople if necessary.*

### BEFORE

- ☐ Get proper approval before any communications are provided to residents. Any distributed letters should inform residents of the incident or pending situation; keep a file copy.
- ☐ Be sure you have resident, employee and supplier partner contact information available in a way that does not require you to have computer access, cell service or electrical power. You may not have access to those options during and immediately after the storm, but you may still need the information.
- ☐ Distribute notices or communicate through electronic methods to each resident and instruct them to move all items from their patios indoors.
- ☐ Advise residents to follow any evacuation orders from local authorities.
- ☐ Make sure the answering service, your website and voicemail greetings are updated with important instructions and information for residents.
- ☐ Post an emergency phone number on the office door along with residents' responsibilities during a storm; include this number in notices distributed, texts or calls made in advance of the storm where possible. Make sure residents are aware you will be providing updates on the answering service, etc.

### DURING

- ☐ Turn off any scheduled social media posts. They may be inappropriate during a disaster.
- ☐ Let your residents know when the property management staff will evacuate the property and how they can reach staff after the storm. Make sure to have home addresses as well as phone numbers.
- ☐ Be sure to account for all employees during an emergency.
- ☐ In some cases, in a natural disaster cell phone service may be disrupted and it may be easier to contact staff and residents via email.
- ☐ Messages relayed to employees and residents should be clear and concise to ensure consistent delivery.
- ☐ Keep any community answering service informed about the status of the disaster or emergency.
- ☐ Provide ongoing information for your residents and answering service about the status of repairs.

## AFTER

- ☐ Keep any community answering service informed about the status of the disaster or emergency.
- ☐ Provide ongoing information for your residents and answering service about the status of repairs.
- ☐ If property damage makes some or all of your community unusable or partially unusable, you have options to terminate an affected resident's right of occupancy. If desired, you may also opt to allow temporary increased occupancy of a unit, to accommodate a resident's friends or other family members. TAA has sample forms to assist with both of these situations, and an article outlining a property owner's legal rights and responsibilities after a disaster or catastrophe.

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA



**Follow your company's policies regarding communication with the media; know how you will reach out to appropriate spokespeople if necessary, and who the spokespeople are for your company.**

- + Remember, your priority is your residents and their safety. If you make any comments to the media, that is a message you want to reinforce.
- + If the media arrives unannounced at your community, you do not have to grant them access, and have the right to ask them to stay off the property.
- + If media is allowed onsite, assemble them in an area that will not obstruct emergency personnel.
- + If the media is not authorized on the property let the reporter know you will forward the inquiry to the designated spokesperson within your organization.
- + Get the reporter's name and contact info, as well as the media outlet. Ask if the reporter is on a deadline and pass that information to your spokesperson as well.
- + Never say "no comment" or ask to make comments off the record. "No comment" may look like you have something to hide.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



### **Sample notice from TAA**

#### **Emergency Freeze Notice to All Residents**

*Available on TAA Click & Lease and in the TAA REDBOOK Online*



# SEVERE WINTER STORMS

## Severe Winter Weather Checklist



Follow your company's emergency procedures. These tips are intended to supplement and reinforce your company's emergency guidelines.

Winter storms and blizzards can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice and high winds.



Greater risk



Can last a few hours or several days



Can knock out heat, power and communications services

A **Winter Weather Watch** is a general advisory indicating severe weather conditions such as heavy snow and/or ice may affect the area, though the occurrence, location and timing are uncertain. A **Winter Storm Warning** indicates sleet accumulation of at least a half-inch or heavy snow of at least 6 inches in 12 hours or 8 inches in 24 hours is expected. Be sure to follow your company's procedures to prepare your community for expected severe weather conditions. Refer to the **General Emergency Checklist** for additional steps to take in advance of any emergency situation.

- ☐ Sign up for local media weather alerts.
- ☐ Review your evacuation route and be aware of the closest shelter.
- ☐ Contact your company's IT department and follow its directions for backing up information.
- ☐ Unplug all electrical equipment.
- ☐ Deposit all monies.
- ☐ Board up all office windows.
- ☐ Check roof drains to prevent water accumulation.
- ☐ Drain about two feet of water from swimming pool. (Do not drain entire pool.)
- ☐ Store all pool furniture inside.
- ☐ Remove flags from flagpoles.
- ☐ Move any water-reactive chemicals to watertight containers. Store toxic or flammable materials where they will not be flooded.
- ☐ Check the grounds and secure or remove all loose items, including signs, water hoses, trash cans and outside seating.
- ☐ Lock down dumpsters/compactor doors and the gates surrounding them.
- ☐ Open property gates and disconnect power to gate system.
- ☐ Make sure the answering service, your website and voicemail greeting are updated with important emergency instructions and information.
- ☐ Turn off all interior electricity, use flashlights (avoid candles).

## SEVERE WINTER WEATHER CHECKLIST (CONT.)

- ☐ Disconnect all circuit breakers to leasing office, pool pumps, fountains and sprinklers.
- ☐ Notify alarm company that power to the facility is being shut down via main circuit breaker.
- ☐ Shut down elevators (if property has them) and post signs advising residents to use stairs.
- ☐ Stay indoors and away from doors and windows until the all clear has been given.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### General tips and preparation:

[www.ready.gov/winter-weather](http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather)

### Consumer tips and preparation:

[www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1494008826172-76da095c3a5d6502ec66e3b81d5bb12a/FEMA\\_2017\\_WinterStorm\\_HTP\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1494008826172-76da095c3a5d6502ec66e3b81d5bb12a/FEMA_2017_WinterStorm_HTP_FINAL.pdf)

### American Red Cross preparation tips:

[www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winter-storm.html](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winter-storm.html)

### ARC Mobile Apps (emergency, severe weather and others):

[www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps.html](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps.html)

### Texas Department of Transportation list of Twitter Feeds for real-time updates:

[www.txdot.gov/driver/weather/txdot-twitter-feeds.html](http://www.txdot.gov/driver/weather/txdot-twitter-feeds.html)

Road Conditions: Visit [DriveTexas.org](http://DriveTexas.org) or call 800/452-9292 for road closures.

### State government emergency portal:

[www.emergency.portal.texas.gov](http://www.emergency.portal.texas.gov)

### Texas Department of State Health Services preparedness tips:

[www.texasprepares.org](http://www.texasprepares.org)



### Sample notice from TAA

#### Emergency Freeze Notice to Our Residents

*Available on TAA Click & Lease and in the TAA REDBOOK Online*



### For more information, read

#### Protecting Pipes in Freezing Weather

*Available in the TAA REDBOOK Online*

# STAY SAFE

## After the Severe Winter Storm Checklist



*Do not assume that the danger has passed because the storm has moved on. As many fatalities and injuries occur after the storm as during the storm. Watch for downed power lines, impassable roads and iced bridges.*

- ☐ Call 911 if anyone has been injured.
- ☐ Address life and safety issues on a priority basis.
- ☐ Carefully check damaged apartments for injured residents.
- ☐ Never plug in or reconnect equipment that has been damaged by the storm.
- ☐ Check with the answering service and courtesy officer for anything that requires immediate attention.
- ☐ Inspect the property and record hazards, damage and needed repairs. Take pictures or video of the damage.
- ☐ Keep a log that includes who, what, where, and when along with what repairs were completed.
- ☐ Keep a list of all cash outlays for emergency repairs.
- ☐ Inform your property supervisor about the status of the property after it has been inspected.
- ☐ Follow company incident reporting guidelines.
- ☐ Check storage areas for chemical spills.
- ☐ Secure the property from the elements and looters. Cover windows with plywood and plastic if damaged by the storm.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

General safety tips after a storm:  
<https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

American Red Cross shelter locator:  
[www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/find-an-open-shelter.html](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/find-an-open-shelter.html)

ARC Mobile Apps (emergency, severe weather and others):  
[www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps.html](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps.html)

Texas Department of Transportation list of Twitter Feeds for real-time updates:  
[www.txdot.gov/driver/weather/txdot-twitter-feeds.html](http://www.txdot.gov/driver/weather/txdot-twitter-feeds.html)



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (CONT.)

Road Conditions: Visit [DriveTexas.org](http://DriveTexas.org) or call 800/452-9292 for road closures.

State government emergency portal:  
[www.emergency.portal.texas.gov/](http://www.emergency.portal.texas.gov/)

Texas Department of State Health Services preparedness tips:  
[www.texasprepares.org](http://www.texasprepares.org)



### **Sample forms, notices and resources from TAA**

*Available on TAA Click & Lease and in the TAA REDBOOK Online*

Article: Rental housing owner's rights and legal responsibilities after a natural disaster or other catastrophe

Q&A about property damage caused by a catastrophe

Form: Termination Notice Due to Natural Disaster or Catastrophe

Form: Termination Notice Due to Natural Disaster or Catastrophe for TDHCA-Regulated Affordable Housing

Form: Emergency Post-Disaster/Post-Catastrophe Notice to Our Residents

Form: Lease Addendum Allowing Temporary Increased Occupancy Because of Fire, Natural Disaster or Catastrophe