



**American
Red Cross**

**American Red Cross
of West Michigan**
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News Release

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For Immediate Release

The American Red Cross Urges West Michigan to Prepare for Winter Storm

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., February 26, 2013 – West Michigan is prone to winter storms, and the American Red Cross of West Michigan urges residents to take steps now as several communities are under winter weather advisories.

The Red Cross recommends that individuals and families prepare for winter storms by:

- **Assembling an Emergency Preparedness Kit:** Pack a winter-specific supply kit that includes a warm coat, hat, mittens or gloves, and water-resistant boots, along with extra blankets and extra warm clothing. Sand or non-clumping kitty litter is good to have on hand to help make walkways or steps less slippery. Additionally, make sure you have a first aid kit and essential medications, canned food and can opener, bottled water, flashlights and a battery-powered radio with extra batteries in your home in the event of a power outage.
- **Knowing What to do During a Power Outage:** Prepare to preserve your food by having coolers, and ice. Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. An unopened refrigerator will keep foods cold for about 4 hours. Charge any wireless devices before inclement weather hits. Never use a generator, grill, camp stove, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, garage, basement or any other partially enclosed area. Locate unit away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors. Report any downed power lines.
- **Preparing Your Home and Car:** Winterize your vehicle and keep the gas tank full, which will help to keep the fuel line from freezing. Make sure your home is properly insulated by installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic from the inside to help keep cold air out. Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected every year. Running water, even at a trickle, helps to prevent pipes from freezing.

For more information on winter storm preparedness, visit redcross.org or call 1-800 RED-CROSS.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or join our blog at blog.redcross.org.

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