

Winter Safety after an Ice Storm or Earthquake

**** Keeping Warm in a Cold House** - After an ice storm or an earthquake you may not have either natural gas or electric heat for your home, you can keep warm by closing off rooms you don't need and use only safe sources of heat, like wood and other fuel-burning stoves. Dress in several layers of lightweight clothing, and wear a cap -- most of your body heat is lost through your head. Sleep under several lightweight blankets instead of a single heavy one. Eat well-balanced meals and quick energy foods so your body can produce its own heat.

**** Fire Safety Tips** - Before you start a fire in a wood burning stove or fireplace, make sure there are no obvious cracks in the flue and the chimney is structurally sound. It's important that your heating source has been checked. Make sure there is plenty of ventilation. Use only the fuel designed for your heater. Do not use charcoal to warm your house - the fumes may cause carbon monoxide. Never use gasoline or other flammable liquids to start or quicken a fire. Always keep a screen around an open flame and don't close the damper while ashes are still hot.

**** After an ice storm or earthquake**, use your car's winter emergency supply kit to supplement what you have in your home or at a shelter. The emergency supplies in your car should include items such as blankets, extra clothing, a shovel, a flashlight or matches and candles, and quick energy foods. In the winter, motorists are urged to keep their gas tank filled to prevent gas line freeze-up. Keep your driving to a necessity. Gas may become a precious commodity. If you must travel, listen to the radio to learn what streets or roads are open.

**** Physical Exertion** -- More people die in winter cold waves than in any other weather phenomena. Cold weather itself -- without any exercise -- puts an extra strain on your heart. Heavy exertion, like shoveling snow, pushing a car or even walking fast in cold weather, increases your chances for a heart attack or stroke. In cold weather, also watch for signs of hypothermia, especially in elderly people.