

Hints help prevent hypothermia

How to plan and prepare for the colder season with helpful hints from the Center for Disease Control

By Matthew Ostergren
Arts & Culture Editor

It is coming down to the coldest and wettest part of the year — winter. Every year people find themselves unprepared for the season's hazards. Most of the time there isn't much to be concerned about, but occasionally, conditions become dangerous.

The CDC recommends keeping a battery power radio, a windshield scraper, blankets, other things to keep oneself warm, water, snack food and a first aid kit, just to name a few things.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends having adequate food, clothing and heating, especially for the young and the elderly in order to avoid hypothermia. Staying dry helps a person retain body heat. Hypothermia can occur even at temperatures above 40 degrees if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat or submersion in cold water.

Also, eating meals that



Photo illustration by Brian Steele Clackamas

are well-balanced are excellent for maintaining a healthy body temperature in the cold. Do not consume alcohol or caffeine, as they cause your body to lose heat faster.

Dressing warmly is also recommended. Warm clothes insulate the body from external conditions, allowing the body to maintain a normal temperature more easily.

When it comes to heating homes during the winter, it is important to be cautious. Any combustion heater should be well-ventilated to the outside. Electric space heaters should be spaced a few feet away from anything that can catch on fire and should not be left unattended, as they present a fire hazard.

When it comes to lighting a home during a power outage, it is best to be prepared.

Keeping flashlights and lamps with fresh batteries in easily accessible locations is very important. If one is going to use candles, do not leave them unattended.

According to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), being informed of road conditions is key to personal safety. It is also advised to carry tire chains in case of snow or icy road conditions. Also, make sure your vehicle is in good working condition; for example, check the brakes and tire pressure.

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The American Red Cross offers survival kits on its Web site. They are useful outdoors but would be cable for power outages as well. If the kit itself is expensive, it may be a good idea to look at lists and collect the items oneself.



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