



KENT COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Lawrence A. Stelma – Sheriff



News Release

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Contact: Lisa LaPlante – 616.632.7567

Don't Let a Warm November Fool You: Winter is Coming, Be Prepared

GRAND RAPIDS – This November has shaped up to be quite a bit warmer with a lot less snow than we saw in November 2014. Kent County Emergency Management says now is a good time to stock up on winter supplies and make sure your emergency plan is up to date.

If you haven't shut off water to your outdoor spigots yet, do it now. Make sure you have emergency kits in your car and home this winter. The Michigan Committee for Severe Weather Awareness recommends you keep the following items in your home:

- Battery-powered flashlight and batteries
- Weather and/or portable radio
- Extra food (canned or dried food is best) and a can opener
- Bottled water (at least 3 gallons per person)
- First aid kit

"If you need to use a power generator, make sure the generator is outdoors and follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning," says Jack Stewart, Kent County Emergency Management Coordinator. "Also know the hazards if you need an emergency heating source, like a space heater." Keep about a quarter tank of gas in your car at all times, and have emergency supplies in your car as well: a battery powered radio and extra batteries, a cell phone, and a blanket should be kept within reach.

The cold can cause problems for many, especially people with pre-existing medical conditions, young children, and seniors. "Be a good friend or neighbor. Check on those who are elderly or have a medical condition," Stewart says. "Making a daily call or visit part of your routine could really help someone in need." Make sure when we get snowfall that you shovel sidewalks, curbs-cuts, bus stops and around fire hydrants. If you have a neighbor who can't do it, offer to help. (Kent County is currently working with numerous community leaders and organizations on the **Shoveling Snow Angels** 2015 team. More information on that should be released in the coming weeks.)

The smaller the pet, the quicker the cold impacts them. Puppies and kittens are especially sensitive to the cold, as are elderly pets. Keep them indoors as much as possible. Watch out for community cats that might crawl under the hood of your car to keep warm. Bang loudly on the hood before starting the car, and never leave pets in a car during the winter. Temperatures can be just as cold inside the car as they are outdoors.

[More tips on winter preparedness from the Michigan Committee for Severe Weather Awareness can be found here.](#)