

November 2010

Emergency Preparedness Pointers

Personal Winter Preparedness

Winter is approaching and with it comes a broad array of cold weather activities. Back-country skiing, snow-shoeing, snowmobiling or even sledding can lead Idahoans into fairly remote areas to enjoy these pastimes. The best way to enjoy these activities is to be ready for what winter can bring. Changes in the weather, road conditions, personal well being or vehicle mechanics can turn an enjoyable outing into a fight for survival. Whether you are a winter sport enthusiast or just traveling by motor vehicle, prepare for and then enjoy winter.

Know Before You Go

There are two factors to consider before taking any trip. Road and weather conditions can dictate travel plans. Fortunately, that information is available on the web and accessible 24 hours a day. For information on road conditions in Ada County, throughout Idaho and in the surrounding states go to:

<https://adacounty.id.gov/accem/Learn-Local-Hazards/Road-Conditions>



The links on this webpage will provide information on these locations. Additionally, in Idaho and all of its surrounding states, calling **511** while on the road can get the most up to date road conditions. The next item to check before traveling is the weather. The following link will provide forecasts for Idaho and a few counties in eastern Oregon.

<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/boi/forecast.php>

Knowing what to expect can help direct what items get packed. Weather can change rapidly, so staying in touch with this information via radio or cell phone application is highly recommended.

Winter Preparedness Items

A standard 72 hour kit will contain most of the items needed for daytrip travel preparation. However, there are items that need to be included to make the kit winterized. Review the items below and make sure to pack them before heading off to the mountains to enjoy the snow.

- ① *Insulated Water Containers* - A person can't drink from a frozen solid bottle. Water containers need to keep it a liquid. Staying hydrated during winter activities will lessen the chances of hypothermia.
- ② *Sunglasses* - Wrap around sun glasses or tinted snow goggles can protect eyes from the ultra-violet light reflected by snow that causes snow blindness.
- ③ *Sunscreen and Lip Balm* - Cold, wind and dry air all take moisture from skin. These protective products will help keep skin and lips from cracking.
- ④ *Map/Compass/GPS* - Snow cover can disorient people. Navigational aids are heavily recommended and perhaps even multiple aids to ensure safe travel along known routes.
- ⑤ *Lighting* - Every kit should have a flashlight and batteries. But, many outdoor winter activities require the use of both hands. This is a good time to add a headlamp and the appropriate batteries to the kit.
- ⑥ *Fire* - Waterproof matches, lighter, and fire starter supplies can be life saving items. Make sure to have the ability to start an emergency survival or signal fire.
- ⑦ *Personal Insulation*- Dressing in layers is very important. Moisture wicking undergarments make the best base layer . The mid layer (shirt, vest, pants) should be wool, fleece or other insulating material. The outer layer (coat, gloves, shoes/boots) needs to be made of water-proof materials. A wool cap, balaclava or face mask should also be included. Fabric choice is important. Cotton clothes are not effective at wicking moisture away from the body and lose their insulating properties when wet. When damp, these clothes actually draw heat away from the body, which can lead to hypothermia. In case of vehicle trouble, carry a cold weather sleeping bag in your motor vehicle. This added insulator could be a life saver.



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