
FACTSHEET

Jan. 19, 2017

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Emergency Management BC

Storm preparedness

Storms in British Columbia can range from moderate in severity, which may only last a few hours and impact a single community, to severe weather events which can affect much of the province and last for several days. Regardless of the severity of a storm, it is important that British Columbians take steps to prepare to remain safe.

Facts:

Wind Storms

- Strong winds can knock down trees and power lines and cause power disruptions in communities. It is important to have an emergency kit that includes flashlights with extra batteries – avoid candles as they pose a fire hazard. Also have non-perishable, ready-to-eat food in your home that does not require electricity to prepare.
- Do not go near dangling power lines. Report them to the power company.
- Leave phone lines free for emergency use. Call 911 only if there is imminent danger.
- Report any broken sewer lines or water-mains to the local authorities.
- Drive cautiously and only if necessary. Debris, downed power lines and damaged roads make driving dangerous.
- Use surge protectors to protect sensitive electrical equipment such as computers, DVD players and TVs, and try to keep batteries charged in cellular devices.
- When your lights go out, check to see whether BC Hydro is already aware of the outage by visiting bchydro.com, calling 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224-9376) from a corded landline, or *49376 (*HYDRO) on your mobile phone. You can also log in to your BC Hydro account to report an outage online.
- FortisBC electricity customers in the Southern Interior should call 1 866 436-7847 or visit fortisbc.com.

Rain Storms

- Torrential rains can cause creeks and rivers to overflow. Avoid these water channels as they tend to fill up quickly. Riverbanks that look stable can be eroded beneath the surface, causing unstable ground that may collapse. Keep children and pets away from streams and rivers and watch for changing conditions.
- Protect your home by clearing out your gutters, maintaining perimeter drains, making sure waterspouts are far enough away from your residence, and checking that nearby storm-water drains on your street are free of leaves and blockage.
- Avoid driving if possible and never attempt to drive through floodwater; the depth of water is not always obvious. The road may be washed out under the water and sinkholes could exist. Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars

causing loss of control and possible stalling, while a foot of water will float many vehicles. If a car stalls in floodwater, get out quickly and move to higher ground.

- If water levels are high enough to cover your natural gas meter, call FortisBC at 1 800 663-9911 to check your meters before using any of your equipment. Flood waters may have shifted your home or caused other stresses to the gas piping. Any gas appliances that have been flooded should not be used until inspected by a registered gas contractor to ensure your safety.

Winter Storms

- Arctic outflow warnings are issued when forecasts predict bitterly cold winds that can create wind chill values of -20 C or less for six hours or more. In these conditions, limit outdoor exposure or use caution due to the increased risk for frostbite and hypothermia. Be particularly mindful of children and pets being outdoors at this time.
- Always wear clothing appropriate for the weather. Dress warmly in layers with a wind resistant outer layer, and use synthetic and wool fabrics which provide better insulation.
- If you get wet, change into dry clothing immediately. You lose heat faster when wet.
- Drive with care. Strong winds combined with snow or rain can significantly reduce visibility. Winter drivers should monitor DriveBC road conditions and have an emergency kit in their vehicles that includes warm clothes and winter footwear, a shovel, food and water, a flashlight, and a fully-charged cell phone for emergency calls.
- Carbon monoxide exposure can be deadly. Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside your home, garage, basement, or any partially enclosed area.

Learn More

- Environment and Climate Change Canada weather alerts and specific regional details: <http://ow.ly/7QwV3088EK9>.
- BC Hydro Electrical safety tips during disasters: <http://ow.ly/gWdl3088EOv>.
- FortisBC natural gas safety tips: <http://ow.ly/RgRJ3088ERJ>.
- PreparedBC emergency planning tips and guides: <http://ow.ly/7wgU308832f>.

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