

If having difficulty traveling on sidewalks due to lack of shoveling, contact the City or Town Hall to find out what is their sidewalk snow removal policy. Advocate for enforcement of snow sidewalk removal laws! If there are no local polices contact local Commission on Disability to develop one. Sidewalks are considered a public accommodation under the ADA. For more information on Sidewalk Snow Removal polices go to the WalkBoston website at www.Walkboston.org.

Dress for the Weather

- **Wear several layers** of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.
- **Wear mittens**, which are warmer than gloves.
- **Wear a hat.**
- **Cover your mouth** with a scarf to protect your lungs.

Winter Outerwear Resources (No Endorsement Implied!)

Footwear: YakTrax (slip-over device for your shoes/boots) www.yaktrax.com or available from Campmor: 888-226-7667 or www.campmor.com

www.Maxiaids.com: Ice Treads Slip-on Cleats

Spiky Safety Treads

STABILicers: www.32north.com 800-782-2423

Also check out hiking or outdoor catalogs or stores such as:

LL Bean: 800-441-5713 www.llbean.com

Cabelas: 800-237-4444 www.cabelas.com

The Sportsman's Choice: 800-888-3060 www.sportsmansguide.com

Will also be able to find walking sticks at these type of stores

Flip-up Ice Spikes for Support Canes: Ambutech: 800-561-2240 www.ambutech.com or check local Pharmacy or low vision catalogs

Reflective Clothing: <http://www.night-gear.com/>

Mittens: Mobility Mitten: Knitted Mitten with a hole at the top for a long cane to slide through-order from the Maryland School for the Blind, O&M Dept. 410-444-5000.

<http://www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org/>

Barbara's Crocheted Cane Glove: Cane travelers in cold climates need to wear gloves while using a long cane or support cane. For more information, or to obtain the pattern for these gloves, contact: Barbara Estes, barbestes@yahoo.com

Suggestions for Walking in the Winter Months:

- Walk like a Penguin: keep your knees loose, extend arms to the sides to keep balance (Adapt this technique when using a cane) (Canadian Safety Council)
- Point feet out slightly (Toes out)
- Bend knees slightly and walk flat-footed, don't take long strides or run.
- Take short steps or shuffle
- Avoid boots with smooth soles and heels
- Walk slower-plan for your route to take a longer time.
- Dress in Layers, base layer should wick sweat away from your body to keep skin dry
- Hat: Try different types to choose one that will provide comfort but allow for hearing of traffic.
- Neck gaiter, ski mask, scarf
- Sunscreen & lip protector
- Waterproof shoes or boots
- Socks: use heavier or wear two pairs for more insulation-however be sure your foot fits comfortably in the boot.
- Have a good reason to go out in bad weather
- Have knowledge of several alternative routes
- Understand the effects of the sun in regards to melting & refreezing issues on the sidewalks one travels.
- Don't travel close to building lines due to falling ice or snow.
- To climb over a snowbank, one should turn sidewalks and walk up sideways, slowly in order to maintain balance.
- One must be very careful in locating curb & curbcuts at street crossings, just because there is an opening doesn't mean that is the correct place to cross.
- Carry hand or toe warmers packets with you
- Sunglasses may be needed due to snow glare
- Be prepared to walk slower & realize your time distance will be off.
- Be prepared for the unexpected.
- Always check on the wind chill factor: frostbite can occur very quickly on any exposed skin without one being aware.
- Be prepared to walk through snow drifts, puddles and on ice. Carry a knapsack or fanny pack to carry items which may assist you in keeping your balance and will stay with you if you do fall.
- If having trouble with balance- bring another long cane (with a pencil tip), ski pole or walking pole to assist with balance and to check out snow drifts.
- Wear bright clothes, so cars can see you.

- Remember cars have less ability to brake and may not have good control in the snow and ice.
- Be aware of the traffic flow changes before or after a street is plowed.
- One may want to travel later in the day when the sidewalks are cleared.
- If it snows when you are out be aware your route will now be different than when you left in the morning. Have a back up plan, use of Para-transit, cabs, list of family or friends who can assist with transportation.

Be aware landmarks will change:

- May follow walking path in the snow, but realize that it may not take you to where you usually cross.
- Traffic sounds may be muffled due to snow on streets.
- Grass areas may harden, making them harder to detect from the sidewalk.
- Landmarks may not be found due to snow or ice.
- Wind, snow and/or rain will make hearing traffic more difficult
- There may be less traffic during bad weather, causing alignment issues.

Be aware of the snow removal policies in your town and where you travel on a regular basis

Questions to ask before going out:

- Do I really need to go out?
- What are the conditions of the sidewalks & streets?
- Have footpaths been established on walking routes?
- Are the sidewalks shoveled?
- Are snowbanks present?
- What type of snow? Light, heavy & wet or icy?
- Always check the windchill factors.

If you need to go out be prepared! Always dress warmer than you think you will need. If waiting for a bus or subway, it can get quite cold waiting for a period of time outdoors, then when someone is walking.

January is “Get Informed!” Month:

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency is found in the Public Safety Agencies area of the State's webpage: www.mass.gov .

Other resources include:

The Citizen Corps: <http://www.citizencorps.gov/citizenCorps/councilsforstate.do?state=MA>

The Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org/where/chapts.asp#MA>

Massachusetts Falls Prevention Coalition: 1-800-227-7233

From the Emergency Preparedness Initiative (EPI) Project of the National Organization on Disability at www.nod.org

Learn about the types of hazards that are most likely to affect your community.

Get informed about what emergency preparedness and response plans currently exist, and how that will impact you. Contact your local Emergency Management Agency for more information.

Find out what emergency shelters are in your community and if any are for special/medical needs; find their locations and choose at least three that are close by.

Get informed about what accessible transportation is available during emergencies and how you will be able to access those services. Note: During emergencies all transportation becomes limited. Get informed now and make alternate plans!

Find out where to get alert and notification information. Is it from the TV? Radio? Internet? Is this information accessible to you now? If not, you cannot expect that it will be during an emergency.

Before Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

Add the following supplies to your disaster supplies kit:

- **Ice Melter with calcium chloride (CaCl₂)** which is the best choice for the environment, plants and grass and animals. Rock salt is not a good choice to use to melt ice on walkways due to environment issues.
- **Snow shovels** and other snow removal equipment.

Prepare your home and family

- **Prepare for possible isolation in your home** by having sufficient heating fuel; regular fuel sources may be cut off. For example, store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood-burning stove.
- **Winterize your home** to extend the life of your fuel supply by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic.
- **Winterize your house, barn, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter** for your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment. Clear rain gutters; repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.
- **Insulate pipes** with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- **Keep fire extinguishers on hand**, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk, as more people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.
- **Learn how to shut off water valves** (in case a pipe bursts).
- **Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors or employees.**
- **Hire a contractor to check the structural ability of the roof** to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow - or water, if drains on flat roofs do not work.

Drivers Resources:

Drivers should be prepared: for additional information also go to the National Safety Council Web site: www.nsc.org

Always clear snow off car roofs to avoid snow & ice blowing off & damaging other cars on the highway.

“How to prepare your car” from FEMA:

- **Check or have a mechanic check the following items on your car:**
 - Antifreeze levels** - ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
 - Battery and ignition system** - should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean.
 - Brakes** - check for wear and fluid levels.
 - Exhaust system** - check for leaks and crimped pipes and repair or replace as necessary. *Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.*
 - Fuel and air filters** - replace and keep water out of the system by using additives and maintaining a full tank of gas.
 - Heater and defroster** - ensure they work properly.
 - Lights and flashing hazard lights** - check for serviceability.
 - Oil** - check for level and weight. Heavier oils congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.
 - Thermostat** - ensure it works properly.
 - Windshield wiper equipment** - repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.
 - Install good winter tires.** Make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. However, some jurisdictions require that to drive on their roads, vehicles must be equipped with chains or snow tires with studs.
 - Maintain at least a half tank of gas** during the winter season.
- **Place a winter emergency kit in each car** that includes: a shovel, windshield scraper and small broom, flashlight, battery powered radio, extra batteries, water, snack food, matches, extra hats, socks and mittens, First aid kit with pocket knife, Necessary medications, blanket(s), tow chain or rope, Ice melter and sand, booster cables, emergency flares, fluorescent distress flag, etc.