

Are You Prepared For Winter Weather?

In 2021, Winter Storm Uri reminded us that no part of the state is off-limits when it comes to severe winter weather and freeze damage. From the Panhandle to the coast and everywhere in between, nearly every governmental entity has a story related to that storm. Widespread system failures underscored how quickly conditions can overwhelm communities when equipment, facilities, and emergency plans aren't prepared or do not account for challenges associated with the event. Local government crews are often the first to respond, so staying on top of maintenance, supplies, and communication plans is critical to keeping employees and the community safe when temperatures drop, ice begins to form, or winter precipitation falls from the sky.

1

Equipment Maintenance. Generators, HVAC units, vehicles, and powered equipment need to be inspected and tested well before cold weather arrives. Perform routine checks such as monthly generator runs, annual HVAC inspections, daily fleet checks, and regular inspections of sprinkler systems..

2

Building Maintenance. Make sure staff know where water shut-off valves are located and how to use them in case of a burst pipe. Prevent frozen pipes by insulating exposed lines and using heaters or heat tracing in vulnerable areas. Don't forget to secure and monitor vacant buildings, which are often the first to suffer damage.

3

Emergency Supplies. Stock up on essentials like potable water, diesel for generators, flashlights, and appropriate winter PPE. Vehicles should carry ice scrapers, blankets, traction materials like ice melt or sand, and a phone charger. These supplies help keep crews stay mobile and allow critical services to continue even during extended outages or road impacts.

4

Emergency Contacts. Update your roster of essential employees and clarify who responds on weekends or after hours. Maintain current contact information for utility providers, remediation contractors, and state emergency management partners. Quick communication reduces delays and helps coordinate a faster response when conditions start to deteriorate. (see SynergyNDS below)

5

Community Consideration. Identify and confirm warming center locations, and communicate them clearly to the public. Use social media, automated messaging systems, and local news outlets to push timely updates on closures, hazards, and available assistance. Strong communication helps make safe choices and reduces strain on emergency services.



LEARN MORE WITH THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [TMLIRP STP Podcast 'The storm has passed. Now What? The Pool's Synergy NDS Turnkey Recovery Program' Episode #6](#)
- [TMLIRP SynergyNDS Emergency Turnkey Recovery Program](#)
- Winter Weather: [Winter Weather | Ready.gov](#)
- Power Outage Safety: [Power Outage Safety | American Red Cross](#)