How Older American Should Prepare for Emergencies including Winter Storms

By Elder Services of Berkshire County

Water, nonperishable food, a personal first-aid kit, flashlights and a battery-powered radio are basics to have on hand in case of an emergency, but some other items are particularly important if you are 50 years or older.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has a list of information targeted specifically for older Americans facing an emergency. They recommend that you gather:

- A three-day minimum supply of medications, along with a cooler and ice packs if your medications require refrigeration
- Medical supplies, if needed, such as syringes and test strips
- Contact lens solution or an extra pair of glasses
- Hearing aids and extra batteries if you use them
- An identification band with your full name and a list of allergies
- An index card with family member contact information
- Manuals from any medical devices including oxygen, walkers, and wheel chairs, etc.
- A complete list of all medications you are currently prescribed; and
- Cash to be used if ATMs are not working

The Department of Homeland Security also suggests the following items for everyone’s storm kit:

- 1 gallon of water per person
- A three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery powered or hand-crank radio
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Cellphone and chargers
- Warm blankets, mittens and gloves
- First aid kit

For your vehicle:

- Windshield wiper fluid
- A full tank of gas
- Check the tire pressure
- Jumper cables
- Cat litter or sand to help tires get traction or rock salt to melt ice
- Put a shovel in the trunk
- Make sure the hazard lights are functioning
- Emergency flares.

Stay Safe this winter!
Helpful Hints

By Helen Hainsworth

Soak cloudy crystal in warm vinegar for five minutes to remove spots. Rinse. Buff dry.

Keep track of which sponge you use for dishes and which one you use for counters by just cutting off the corner of the sponge you use for counters.

Polish your stainless steel sink with flour. Wash and dry the sink. Sprinkle with flour. Buff until it sparkles.

Remember to service your boiler

It’s that time of year, time to clean your boiler and check for malfunctions, leaks, and other hazards. This annual task can identify small problems before they turn into larger (and more costly) emergencies. But it’s not just about saving money, it’s a safety issue, too. Faulty boilers can lead to dangerous gases being released into your home.

If you rent your home, your landlord is obligated to conduct an annual inspection. If you own your home, it is likely that the manufacturer of your boiler requires the same to maintain your warranty. We recommend you hire a professional to conduct this service.

A general service inspection should include:

- Fire up the boiler to see if there are any malfunctions in the ignition process
- Check all main components of the boiler to make sure they are functioning properly
- Makes sure your flues are properly sealed
- Verify the efficiency of your burner by analyzing your flue gases
- Clean all parts as necessary
- Check for gas leaks and verify all seals are tight and free of corrosion

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