

Safety tips for dealing with winter storms

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As winter storms approach the Mid-Atlantic, it's best to keep some basic winter safety tips in mind during and after the storm.

We are gearing for a significant winter storm to impact much of Virginia and North Carolina over the next few days.

Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe has declared a State of Emergency ahead of the winter storm expected to impact the state through the weekend.

Governor Pat McCrory has declared a State of Emergency for North Carolina due to the storm.

According to Meteorologist Myles Henderson, we will likely see the first round of snow on Friday, rain will melt it, then the second round Saturday night.

In addition to the snow and rain, we will see very strong winds. Winds will start to crank up on Friday with gusts to near 30 mph. Gusts could reach to 40+ mph on Saturday and Sunday.

Here are some snow safety tips from Patient First:

Shoveling Snow can be a strenuous activity for many people. It can increase blood pressure and heart rate. People with a history of heart disease, high blood pressure or strokes should not shovel snow.

- If you must shovel snow, shovel as early as possible. Snow is heavier after it's been on the ground for a few days, which can melt and freeze and create a solid chunk of snow.
- Make sure that you are properly hydrated and prepare your body before shoveling: jog in place or do ten jumping jacks to get your blood flowing before you start.
- Be sure to take your time and move slowly when shoveling snow—shoveling too fast can increase your blood pressure, which makes you more likely to sprain or pull a muscle.

Slips and falls by **walking on ice** can be serious. Icy patches can be hard to see.

- If you see an area you think may be icy, tap the edge of the area with your foot.
- Wear shoes with gripping soles to provide traction.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets while walking to help keep your balance on a slippery surface.

- Don't carry heavy items when you walk on slippery surfaces—it can change your center of balance, which can make you slip and fall

Frostbite happens when skin and its underlying tissue are exposed to extremely cold temperatures and freezing conditions. A tell tale sign of frostbite is skin that appears waxy or hard with a gray tone. Damaged skin may itch or burn and may turned red in color as the affected area thaws.

- The first step—get out of the cold. Get to a warm place as soon as possible.
- Remove any wet clothing.
- If you can't get out of the cold, place your hands under your arms to warm them.
- Cover areas that can be most affected by frostbite, like your nose and ears, with a scarf
- Try not to walk if your feet have frostbite. It can make the condition worse.