

Winter safety is one of the more difficult to achieve. We get cold. Things get cold. Things break in unexpected ways.

Around your home, shack or remote operating position, fire and carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning are huge threats. Power outages in the winter lead to use of portable or ad-hoc heating systems and generators, all of which carry with them fire hazards from their fuel sources, and of course generate poisonous carbon monoxide gasses. When you see that you may need to use any of these, make sure that you keep fire safety in mind. Store fuels a safe distance away from structures, keep a suitably sized fire extinguisher of the right type at both the fuel storage location and at the equipment location. Test carbon monoxide detectors regularly, and if using portable system such as kerosene heaters or portable generators, obtain portable CO detectors and place in each sleeping area and work area.

When it comes to work on things outside such as towers, masts, or vehicle repairs, make sure you wear clean dry gloves. We don't want to relive the scene in A Christmas Story where a bodily part freezes to a metal object! By the way, just because the air temperature is above freezing doesn't mean that the tower or flagpole has warmed up enough! Of course, dress warmly and in layers as you don't want to work up a sweat and then get chilled too quickly later on. Staying dry is staying warm.

For travel, put together a winter travel safety kit. There are plenty of articles out there on these, and you probably have everything you need to make one, or awfully close. The Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation has an excellent flyer available at <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/educational-materials/Documents/Winter-Survival-Brochure.pdf> that covers the "how to" quite well. The one thing I would add is ice traction covers for shoes and boots. Here in VA we don't get a lot of snow, but we get a lot of ice, and it's almost impossible to move around on ice without some kind of traction device on your shoes. A quick Amazon search for "ice traction for shoes" will bring a huge assortment. I keep two pair in each of our vehicles so that no matter what, we can at least walk for help if needed. And of course, keep your radio batteries warm! Batteries don't like cold, and it's awfully hard to call for help with a frozen battery!

73 and warm thoughts!

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