

EMERGENCY

PREPAREDNESS

TIPS



For Public Housing Residents

Winter weather can pose serious risks to residents and properties. Understanding weather alerts and taking preventive steps can help reduce damage, disruptions, and emergencies.

UNDERSTANDING WINTER WEATHER ALERTS

The National Weather Service issues the following alerts based on storm severity:

1. **Winter Weather Advisory.** Hazardous winter conditions are occurring or expected and may cause inconvenience.
2. **Winter Storm Watch.** Heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain is possible within the next 12–36 hours.
3. **Winter Storm Warning.** Hazardous winter weather is imminent, occurring, or highly likely and poses a significant threat to life and property.
4. **Blizzard Warning.** Sustained winds or frequent gusts over 35 mph with visibility reduced to $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or less for at least three hours.
5. **Frost/Freeze Warning.** Below-freezing temperatures may damage plants, crops, and plumbing. Residents without adequate heat should take extra precautions.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

For RRHA public housing residents, prepare for INCLEMENT weather by creating a disaster kit (water, food, meds, radio, flashlight, chargers), securing your unit (windows, loose items), having an evacuation plan with your housing authority/neighbors, and staying informed via apps like FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)/NOAA (National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration) radio for severe weather, ensuring you have extra warmth, food, and essential supplies for potential power

Before a Storm Hits (General Preparedness)

1. **Emergency Kit:** Stock a 3-day supply of water (1 gallon/person/day), non-perishable food, medications, batteries, flashlights, hand-crank/battery radio, phone chargers, first-aid, hygiene items, and copies of important documents.
2. **Know Your Plan:** Understand your building's evacuation routes and designated safe spots (interior rooms, basements) for events like tornadoes; check with your housing authority.
3. **Secure Your Unit:** Bring in outdoor items (outdoor furniture, potted plants), secure windows, and clear gutters if possible, to prevent water damage.
4. **Home Safety:** Test smoke detectors and CO monitors; consider battery-operated/hand-crank versions for outages.

During Winter Storms (Snow & Ice)

1. **Stay Warm:**
 - Have extra blankets, warm clothing, and understand how to safely use alternative heat sources.
 - Maintain temperatures at 55°F or above
 - Open vanity cabinets to expose pipes to warm air
 - Keep all interior (inside) doors open for airflow
 - Ensure windows and storm windows are closed securely.
2. **Pipe Protection:** Insulate exposed pipes in attics/basements if you can and know how to shut off your water main.
3. **Vehicle Kit:** Keep blankets, water, snacks, shovel, scraper, jumper cables, and warm clothes in your car.

During Severe Weather (Wind & Rain – Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Floods)

1. **Stay Informed:** Use the FEMA app and a NOAA weather radio for real-time alerts.
2. **Evacuate If Instructed:** Follow official instructions, use recommended routes, and have cash, medicines, supplies, and pet needs ready.
3. **Protect Valuables:** Document your belongings (photos/videos) for insurance BEFORE the storm.

Key Contacts & Resources

1. **FEMA App:** [FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov/mobile-app)
2. **VA Emergency Management:** www.vaemergency.gov/emergency-kit

