



Winter Weather Awareness

Welcome to Iowa! One day sunny and the next day snow has hidden your car. Never fear! With a little planning you can be prepared to survive and thrive during an Iowa winter.

Indian Hills Community College will assess weather reports and make decisions on classes or possible closings as soon as possible. *All community members should remember that in all situations you should never put yourself in harm's way by driving or going out into the weather if you believe the risks are too high!* If administrators decide to close or cancel classes, we will send an IHCC Alert, as well as public notification through available local media resources (radio or TV).

If you have not yet signed up to receive IHCC Alerts, please go to www.indianhills.edu/alert and register your mobile device or home phone number. The process is easy and free.

For all severe weather

Be aware of weather conditions at all times, especially if severe weather is predicted.

- Sign up for IHCC Alert at www.indianhills.edu/alert
- Sign up for an email or text alert from local television stations
- Download a weather app for smart phones or mobile devices (many are free)
- If you receive a severe weather message, spread the word to your co-workers and family members, especially those who work outside

Dangers of Ice

Frozen ponds may look beautiful and enticing but the ice may not be as sturdy as it appears to be. You can never be sure of its thickness and how much weight it can support. Ice on frozen ponds, lakes and waterways can pose a threat to the safety of anyone who walks out on them and the safety of emergency services who try to rescue them. We would also urge you not to skate or walk on iced over surfaces which could be more dangerous than they first look. Venturing onto frozen ponds, lakes and rivers is extremely dangerous. Please don't put yourself or others at risk and stay off the ice.

Before a Winter storm

To prepare for a winter storm you should do the following:

- Before a winter storm approaches, add the following supplies to your [emergency kit](#):
 - Rock salt or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways. Visit the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) for a complete list of recommended products.
 - Sand to improve traction.
 - Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.
 - Sufficient heating fuel. You may become isolated in your home and regular fuel sources may be cut off. Store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood-burning stove.
 - Adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm.

- Make a [Family Communications Plan](#). Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- A NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts alerts and warnings directly from the NWS for all hazards. You may also sign up in advance to receive notifications from your local emergency services.
- Download FEMA's Be Smart. Know Your Alerts and Warnings for a summary of notifications at: www.ready.gov/prepare. Free smart phone apps, such as those available from FEMA and the American Red Cross, provide information about finding shelters, providing first aid, and seeking assistance for recovery.
- Minimize travel. If travel is necessary, keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle.
- Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.
- **Winterize Your Vehicle**

Check or have a mechanic check the following items on your car:

- **Antifreeze levels** - ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
- **Battery and ignition system** - should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean.
- **Brakes** - check for wear and fluid levels.
- **Exhaust system** - check for leaks and crimped pipes and repair or replace as necessary. Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.
- **Fuel and air filters** - replace and keep water out of the system by using additives and maintaining a full tank of gas. A full tank will keep the fuel line from freezing.
- **Heater and defroster** - ensure they work properly.
- **Lights and flashing hazard lights** - check for serviceability.
- **Oil** - check for level and weight. Heavier oils congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.
- **Thermostat** - ensure it works properly.
- **Windshield wiper equipment** - repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.
- **Install good winter tires** - Make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. However, some jurisdictions require that to drive on their roads, vehicles must be equipped with chains or snow tires with studs.

Know the Terms

Know the terms used to describe changing winter weather conditions and what actions to take. These terms can be used to determine the timeline and severity of an approaching storm. (Advisory / Watch / Warning). The NWS also issues advisories and warnings for other winter weather, including blizzards, freezes, wind chill, lake effect snow, and dense fog. Be alert to weather reports and tune in for specific guidance when these conditions develop.

Freezing Rain - Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, creating a coating of ice on roads, walkways, trees and power lines.

Sleet - Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes moisture on roads to freeze and become slippery.

Wind Chill- Wind chill is the temperature it “feels like” when you are outside. The NWS provides a Wind chill Chart to show the difference between air temperature and the perceived

temperature and the amount of time until frostbite occurs. For more information, visit:

www.nws.noaa.gov/om/windchill.

Winter Weather Advisory - Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. When caution is used, these situations should not be life threatening. The NWS issues a winter weather advisory when conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences that may be hazardous. If caution is used, these situations should not be life-threatening.

Winter Storm Watch - A winter storm is possible in your area. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for more information. The NWS issues a winter storm watch when severe winter conditions, such as heavy snow and/or ice, may affect your area but the location and timing are still uncertain. A winter storm watch is issued 12 to 36 hours in advance of a potential severe storm. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, local radio, TV, or other news sources for more information. Monitor alerts, check your emergency supplies, and gather any items you may need if you lose power.

Winter Storm Warning - A winter storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area.

Blizzard Warning - Sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 miles per hour or greater and considerable amounts of falling or blowing snow (reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile) are expected to prevail for a period of three hours or longer.

Frost/Freeze Warning - Below freezing temperatures are expected.

During Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

- Stay indoors during the storm.
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy, walkways.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack—a major cause of death in the winter. Use caution, take breaks, push the snow instead of lifting it when possible, and lift lighter loads.
- Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses all of its insulating value and transmits heat rapidly.
- Signs of Frostbite: Occurs when the skin and body tissue just beneath it freezes. Loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, earlobes, face, and the tip of the nose.
- What to Do: Cover exposed skin, but do not rub the affected area in an attempt to warm it up. Seek medical help immediately.
- Signs of Hypothermia: Dangerously low body temperature. Uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion.
- What to Do: If symptoms of hypothermia are detected take the person's temperature. If it is below 95°, seek medical attention immediately. Get the victim to a warm location. Remove wet clothing. Warm the center of the body first by wrapping the person in blankets or putting on dry clothing. Give warm, non-alcoholic beverages if the victim is conscious. Seek medical help immediately.
 - The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends, if you detect symptoms of frostbite, seek medical care. Because frostbite and hypothermia both result from exposure, first determine whether the victim also shows signs of hypothermia. Hypothermia is a more serious medical condition and requires emergency medical assistance.
- Drive only if it is absolutely necessary. If you must drive: travel in the day; don't travel alone; keep others informed of your schedule; stay on main roads and avoid back road shortcuts.

- Let someone know your destination, your route, and when you expect to arrive. If your car gets stuck along the way, help can be sent along your predetermined route.
- Once the storm has passed, if you are not already home, follow instructions from your local transportation department and emergency management agency to determine which route will be safest for you to get home. Drive with extra caution.

Dress for the Weather

- If you must go outside, wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.
- Wear mittens, which are warmer than gloves.
- Wear a hat. A hat will prevent loss of body heat.
- Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.

After Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

- If your home loses power or heat for more than a few hours or if you do not have adequate supplies to stay warm in your home overnight, you may want to go to a designated public shelter if you can get there safely. Text **SHELTER** + your **ZIP code** to **43362** (4FEMA) to find the nearest shelter in your area (e.g., SHELTER20472)
- Bring any personal items that you would need to spend the night (such as toiletries, medicines). Take precautions when traveling to the shelter. Dress warmly in layers, wear boots, mittens, and a hat.
- Continue to protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia by wearing warm, loose-fitting, lightweight clothing in several layers. Stay indoors, if possible.

For additional severe weather safety information, visit the **National Weather Service** website.

Cancellation/Delay Notification Procedures

In the event Indian Hills Community College should delay or cancel classes, the following radio and television stations will be notified:

- Radio
 - 107.7 KLEE
 - 105.5 KILJ
 - 105.3 KEDB
 - 104.9 KBOE
 - 104.3 KRKN
 - 101.5 Kiss FM
 - 100.5 KMEM
 - 98.7 KMGO
 - 97.7 TOM FM
 - 96.7 KIIC
 - 92.7 KTWA
 - 88.3 KQLF
 - 1570am KMCD
 - 1480am KLEE
 - 1400am KCOG
 - 1320am KNIA
 - 1240am KBIZ
 - 1130am KILJ
- Television:
 - KTVO (Ottumwa/Kirksville)
 - WHO (Des Moines)
 - KCCI (Des Moines)
 - WOI (Des Moines)