

special assistance: infants, elderly people, or people with disabilities. Caregivers or large families may need additional assistance in emergency situations.

- Avoid driving and other travel until conditions have improved. Access may be limited to some parts of the community. Roads may be blocked by snow, emergency vehicles, or extremely hazardous conditions.
- After the storm, if you shovel snow, be extremely careful. Avoid overexertion. It is physically strenuous work, so take frequent breaks. Heart attacks from shoveling heavy snow are a leading cause of death during winter.
- Follow forecasts and be prepared when venturing outside. Major winter storms are often followed by even colder conditions.



Downed power lines create hazardous conditions.

## ***For More Information***

Please contact the following agencies for more information about protecting your family from natural hazards:

Doña Ana County Local Emergency Planning Committee  
Office of Emergency Management  
1170 North Solano, Suite O  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
(575) 647-7900  
[www.donaanalepc.com](http://www.donaanalepc.com)

Doña Ana County Flood Commission  
845 North Motel Boulevard  
Las Cruces, NM 88007  
(575) 525-5558  
[www.donaanacounty.org/flood/](http://www.donaanacounty.org/flood/)

Elephant Butte Irrigation District  
(575) 526-6671  
[www.ebid-nm.org/](http://www.ebid-nm.org/)

City of Las Cruces Public Works Dept.  
Engineering Services  
(575) 528-3131  
[www.las-cruces.org/public\\_works/](http://www.las-cruces.org/public_works/)

New Mexico Department of Transportation  
Roadway Conditions 1-800-432-4269  
<http://www.nmroads.com/>

National Weather Service El Paso/Santa Teresa  
[www.srh.noaa.gov/epz](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/epz)

American Red Cross  
Southwest New Mexico Chapter  
1301 East Griggs Avenue  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
(575) 526-2631  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Unless otherwise noted, the information in this brochure has been adapted from NOAA's National Weather Service, the American Red Cross, and the Doña Ana County Flood Commission.

June 2008

# **Winter Weather**

## **NATURAL HAZARDS Of Southern New Mexico**

# Winter Weather



Each year dozens of Americans die due to exposure to cold. Add to that number vehicle accidents and fatalities, fires due to dangerous use of heaters, and other winter weather fatalities and you have a significant threat.

## Winter Weather Hazard Levels

**OUTLOOK:** Winter storm conditions are possible in the next 2-5 days. Stay tuned to local media for updates.

**WATCH:** Winter storm conditions are possible within the next 36-48 hours. Prepare now!

**WARNING:** Life-threatening severe winter conditions have begun or will begin within 24 hours. Act now!

**ADVISORY:** Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If you are cautious, these situations should not be life threatening.

**Wind Chill** is not the actual temperature, but rather how wind and cold feel on exposed skin. As the wind increases, heat is carried away from the body at an accelerated rate, driving down the body temperature. Animals are also affected by wind chill; however, cars, plants and other objects are not.

## When a Winter Storm WARNING is Issued...

- Stay indoors during the storm.
- Do not use cooking stoves or ovens as heat sources.
- Insulate exposed water pipes.



Photos from [www.contractorsolutions.com](http://www.contractorsolutions.com) and [www.reflectixinc.com](http://www.reflectixinc.com)

- If you must go outside, several layers of lightweight clothing will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat.
- Gloves (or mittens) and a hat will prevent loss of body heat. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs.
- Understand the hazards of wind chill, which combines the cooling effect of wind and cold temperatures on exposed skin.
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy sidewalks.

- Provide plenty of fresh water and food for your pets and make sure they have shelter from the cold.
- Avoid traveling by car in a storm, but if you must...
  - Carry a Disaster Supplies Kit in the trunk. See the Red Cross website for a full description of the kit.
  - Keep your car's gas tank full for emergency use and to keep the fuel line from freezing.
  - 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.

## What to Do After a Winter Storm

- Continue listening to local radio or television stations or a NOAA Weather Radio for updated information and instructions.
- Check on neighbors who may require

**Hypothermia** is a condition brought on when the body temperature drops to less than 95°F. It can kill. Warning signs include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. For those who survive, there are likely to be lasting kidney, liver and pancreas problems. Take the person's temperature. If below 95°F, seek medical care immediately!