



ALPINE COUNTY UNIFIED COMMAND

DATE: January 9, 2023

RE: Winter Safety Reminders for Alpine County Residents

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DUE TO LARGE-SCALE MIXED PRECIPITATION EVENTS ALPINE COUNTY REMINDS RESIDENTS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF UTILIZING BEST PRACTICE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SNOW LOADED ROOFS, PROPANE TANK USAGE/ACCESS, AND GENERATOR USAGE. POWER OUTAGES AND FLOODING POSSIBLE DUE TO ONGOING STORMS. ALPINE COUNTY UNIFIED COMMAND RECOMMENDS LIMITING TRAVEL DURING STORM CYCLES TO RELIEVE IMPACTS ON EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND ROAD ACCESS.

Due to large-scale mixed precipitation events in Eastern & Western Alpine County, Alpine County Unified Command recommends residents remain vigilant and prepare for impacts to power, roadways and potential flooding,

Sand Bags can be filled at the following locations *sand may be under snow so please prepare to clear snow*****

Fire Station 91: 60 Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120

Fire Station 92: 860 Hot Springs Rd, Markleeville, CA 96120

ISSUED: 4:56 AM JAN. 9, 2023 – NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

...WINTER STORM WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL 4 AM PST WEDNESDAY...

* WHAT...Heavy wet snow. Total snow accumulations through late Tuesday night of 1 to 2 feet, except 2 to 5 feet above 7000 feet. Wind gusts up to 50 mph with exposed ridges gusting in excess of 130 mph at times. Waves up to 4 feet on Lake Tahoe.

* WHERE...Greater Lake Tahoe Area.

* WHEN...Until 4 AM PST Wednesday.

* IMPACTS...Travel could be very difficult to impossible. The hazardous conditions could impact the morning or evening commute. Gusty winds could bring down tree branches.

* ADDITIONAL DETAILS...There will be a lull in snowfall activity this afternoon until late this evening. However, gusty winds, and existing icy/snowy roadway surfaces will keep winter driving conditions in place for many locations.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

Avoid travel if possible, you could be stuck in your vehicle for many hours. If you must travel, prepare for long delays and carry an emergency kit with extra food, water and clothing. If you stay home, have a backup plan in case of power outages.

The latest road conditions can be obtained by calling 5 1 1.

Emergency Services

Emergency Dispatch: 911

Alpine County Sheriff's Office Non-Emergency Dispatch: 530-694-2231

CalTrans Road Conditions: <https://dot.ca.gov/travel>

Media Inquiries Regarding Alpine County Evacuations & Re-Entry

JT Chevallier

Public Information Officer

Alpine County

530-721-1339

jchevallier@alpinecountyca.gov



Lighting pilot lights

IF A PILOT LIGHT REPEATEDLY GOES OUT or is very difficult to light, there may be a safety problem. **DO NOT** try to fix the problem yourself. It is strongly recommended that only a **QUALIFIED SERVICE TECHNICIAN** light any pilot light that has gone out.

YOU ARE TAKING THE RISK of starting a fire or an explosion if you light a pilot light yourself. Carefully follow all of the manufacturer's instructions and warnings concerning the appliance before attempting to light the pilot.

Appliance maintenance



LEAVE IT TO THE EXPERTS. Only a qualified service technician has the training to install, inspect, service, maintain, and repair your appliances. Have your appliances and propane system inspected just before the start of each heating season.

HELP YOUR APPLIANCES "BREATHE."

Check the vents of your appliances to be sure that flue gases can flow easily to the outdoors; clear away any insect or bird nests or other debris. Also, clear the area around your appliances so plenty of air can reach the burner for proper combustion.

DO NOT TRY TO MODIFY OR REPAIR

valves, regulators, connectors, controls, or other appliance and cylinder/tank parts. Doing so creates the risk of a gas leak that can result in property damage, serious injury, or death.

HAVE OLDER APPLIANCE CONNECTORS

INSPECTED. Certain older appliance connectors may crack or break, causing a gas leak. If you have an appliance that is more than 20 years old, have a qualified service technician inspect the connector. Do not do this yourself, as movement of the appliance might damage the connector and cause a leak.



FLAMMABLE VAPORS ARE A SAFETY HAZARD. The pilot light on your propane appliance can ignite vapors from gasoline, paint thinners, and other flammable liquids. Be sure to store and use flammable liquids outdoors or in an area of the building containing no propane appliances.



DON'T RISK IT! If you cannot operate any part of your propane system, or if you think an appliance or other device is not working properly, call your propane retailer or a qualified service technician for assistance.

Running out of gas



DON'T RUN OUT OF GAS. SERIOUS SAFETY HAZARDS, INCLUDING FIRE OR EXPLOSION, CAN RESULT.

- If an appliance valve or a gas line is left open, a leak could occur when the system is recharged with propane.
- If your propane tank runs out of gas, any pilot lights on your appliances will go out. This can be extremely dangerous.
- **A LEAK CHECK IS REQUIRED.** In many states, a propane retailer or a qualified service technician must perform a leak check of your propane system before turning on the gas.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

POLICE:

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

PROPANE RETAILER:

For more information, please visit: www.usepropane.com



IMPORTANT PROPANE SAFETY INFORMATION

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Important Propane Safety Information

for you and your family



Please read and follow the safety rules in this brochure. Share this information with your family to help keep everyone safe and to reduce the risk of serious and potentially fatal injury, fire, or explosion.

Este folleto contiene información importante acerca de la seguridad relacionada con el gas propano: Pida su versión en español a su vendedor de gas propano.

PROPANE
EXCEPTIONAL ENERGY®

If you smell gas



1. NO FLAMES OR SPARKS! Immediately put out all smoking materials and other open flames. Do not operate lights, appliances, telephones, or cell phones. Flames or sparks from these sources can trigger an explosion or a fire.



2. LEAVE THE AREA IMMEDIATELY! Get everyone out of the building or area where you suspect gas is leaking.



3. SHUT OFF THE GAS. Turn off the main gas supply valve on your propane tank if it is safe to do so. To close the valve, turn it to the right (clockwise).



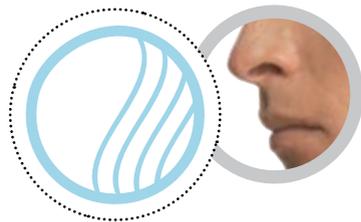
4. REPORT THE LEAK. From a neighbor's home or other nearby building away from the gas leak, call your propane retailer right away. If you can't reach your propane retailer, call 911 or your local fire department.



5. DO NOT RETURN TO THE BUILDING OR AREA until your propane retailer, emergency responder, or qualified service technician determines that it is safe to do so.



6. GET YOUR SYSTEM CHECKED. Before you attempt to use any of your propane appliances, your propane retailer or a qualified service technician must check your entire system to ensure that it is leak-free.



Take the sniff test

Scratch and sniff the blue circle. The odor is similar to propane odor. Have everyone in your family take the sniff test. Always take action if you smell any kind of foul odor.



Can you smell it?

Propane smells like rotten eggs, a skunk's spray, or a dead animal. Some people may have difficulty smelling propane due to their age (older people may have a less sensitive sense of smell); a medical condition; or the effects of medication, alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

ODOR LOSS. On rare occasions, propane can lose its odor. Several things can cause this including:

- The presence of air, water, or rust in a propane tank or cylinder
- The passage of leaking propane through the soil



Since there is a possibility of odor loss or problems with your sense of smell, you should respond immediately to even a faint odor of gas.

Propane gas detectors

Under some circumstances, you may not smell a propane leak. Propane gas detectors sound an alarm if they sense propane in the air. They can provide an additional measure of security. You should consider the purchase of one or more detectors for your home.



GUIDELINES regarding propane gas detectors:

- Buy only units that are listed by Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding installation and maintenance.
- Never ignore the smell of propane, even if no detector is sounding an alarm.



Carbon monoxide AND your safety

WHAT IS CARBON MONOXIDE (CO)?

You can't taste or smell CO, but it is a very dangerous gas, produced when any fuel burns. High levels of CO can come from appliances that are not operating correctly, or from a venting system or chimney that becomes blocked.

CO CAN BE DEADLY! High levels of CO can make you dizzy or sick (see below). In extreme cases, CO can cause brain damage or death.

Symptoms of CO poisoning include:

- Headache
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Fatigue

If you suspect CO is present, act immediately!



- 1. If you or a family member shows physical symptoms of CO poisoning, get everyone out of the building and call 911 or your local fire department.**
- 2. If it is safe to do so, open windows to allow entry of fresh air, and turn off any appliances you suspect may be releasing CO.**
- 3. If no one has symptoms, but you suspect that CO is present, call your propane retailer or a qualified service technician to check CO levels and your propane equipment.**

TO HELP REDUCE THE RISK OF CO POISONING:

- Have a qualified service technician check your propane appliances and related venting systems annually, preferably before the heating season begins.
- Install UL-listed CO detectors on every level of your home.
- Never use a gas oven or range-top burners to provide space heating.
- Never use portable heaters indoors unless they are designed and approved for indoor use.
- Never use a barbecue grill (propane or charcoal) indoors for cooking or heating.
- Regularly check your appliance exhaust vents for blockage.

SIGNS OF IMPROPER APPLIANCE OPERATION THAT CAN GENERATE HIGH CO LEVELS:

- Sooting, especially on appliances and vents
- Unfamiliar or burning odor
- Increased moisture inside of windows

What is propane?

Propane (also called LPG—liquefied petroleum gas—or LP gas) is a liquid fuel stored under pressure. In most systems, propane is vaporized to a gas before it leaves the tank. Propane is flammable when mixed with air (oxygen) and can be ignited by many sources, including open flames, smoking materials, electrical sparks, and static electricity. Severe freeze burn or frostbite can result if propane liquid comes in contact with your skin.



FEMA Snow Load Safety Guidance

FEMA P-957



FEMA

www.FEMA.gov

This flyer summarizes warning signs of overstress conditions during a snow event, key safety issues and risks a snow event poses to buildings, and what to do after a snow event. For information on preventative measures to take before the snow season, download FEMA P-957, *Snow Load Safety Guide*, at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/83501>.

Warning Signs of Overstress Conditions during a Snow Event

Overstressed roofs typically display some warning signs. Wood and steel structures may show noticeable signs of excessive ceiling or roof sagging before failure. The following warning signs are common in wood, metal, and steel constructed buildings:

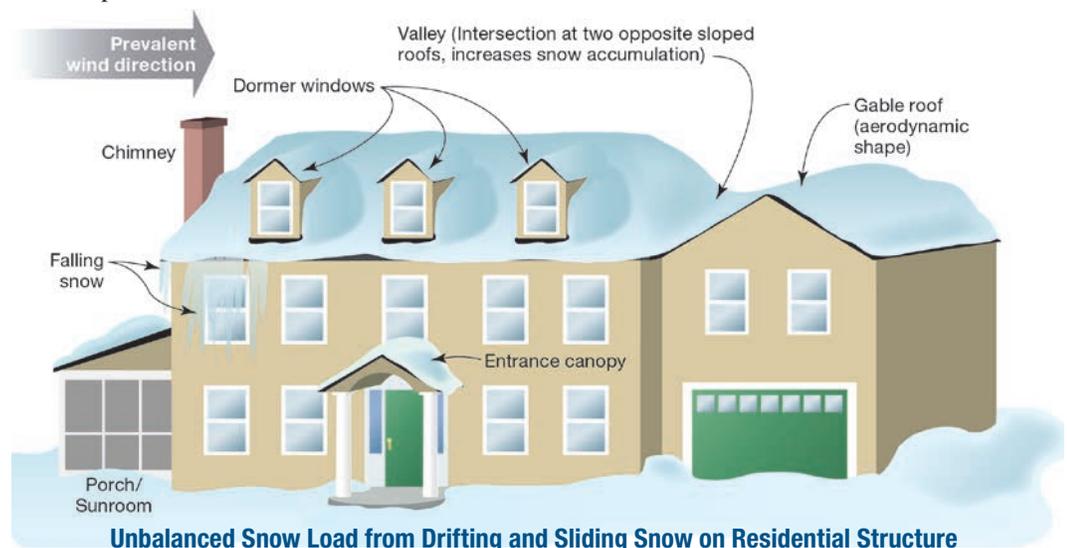
- Sagging ceiling tiles or boards, ceiling boards falling out of the ceiling grid, and/or sagging sprinkler lines and sprinkler heads
- Sprinkler heads deflecting below suspended ceilings
- Popping, cracking, and creaking noises
- Sagging roof members, including metal decking or plywood sheathing
- Bowing truss bottom chords or web members
- Doors and/or windows that can no longer be opened or closed
- Cracked or split wood members
- Cracks in walls or masonry
- Severe roof leaks
- Excessive accumulation of water at nondrainage locations on low slope roofs

Warning! If any of these warning signs are observed, the building should be promptly evacuated and a local building authority and/or a qualified design professional should be contacted to perform a detailed structural inspection.

Key Safety Issues and Risks

Snow accumulation in excess of building design conditions can result in structural failure and possible collapse. Structural failure due to roof snow loads may be linked to several possible causes, including but not limited to the following:

- **Unbalanced snow load from drifting and sliding snow.** When snow accumulates at different depths in different locations on a roof, it results in high and concentrated snow loads that can potentially overload the roof structure.
- **Rain-on-snow load.** Heavy rainfall on top of snow may cause snow to melt and become further saturated, significantly increasing the load on the roof structure.
- **Snow melt between snow events.** If the roof drainage system is blocked, improperly designed or maintained, ice dams may form, which creates a concentrated load at the eaves and reduces the ability of sloped roofs to shed snow. On flat or low slope roof systems, snow melt may accumulate in low areas on roofs, creating a concentrated load.
- **Roof geometry.** Simple roofs with steep slopes shed snow most easily. Roofs with geometric irregularities and obstructions collect snow drifts in an unbalanced pattern. These roof geometries include flat roofs with parapets, stepped roofs, saw-tooth roofs, and roofs with obstructions such as equipment or chimneys.



What to Do After a Snow Event

After a snow event, snow removal may be in order. To determine whether snow removal is necessary, one may enlist valuable resources such as a local building authority and/or a qualified design professional, who will be familiar with the snow conditions of the region and the design capacities of local buildings per the building code. If it is determined that the snow should be removed, snow removal should only be performed by qualified individuals. The qualified individual should follow necessary protocols for safe snow removal to minimize risk of personal injury and lower the potential for damaging the roof covering during the snow removal process.

Warning! Snow removal is a dangerous activity that should only be done by qualified individuals following safety protocols to minimize risks. If at any time there is concern that snow loads may cause a collapse of the roof structure, cease all removal activity and evacuate the building.

If subsequent snow events are anticipated, removing snow from the roof will minimize the risk of accumulating snow causing structural damage. One benefit of immediate snow removal is that the effort required to remove the snow from the rooftop is reduced.

Safety Measures for Snow Removal

Below are some safety measures to take during snow removal to minimize risk of personal injury.

- Any roof snow removal should be conducted following proper OSHA protocol for work on rooftops. Use roof fall arrest harnesses where applicable.
- Always have someone below the roof to keep foot traffic away from locations where falling snow or ice could cause injuries.
- Ensure someone confirms that the area below removal site is free of equipment that could be damaged by falling snow or ice.
- Whenever snow is being removed from a roof, be careful of dislodged icicles. An icicle falling from a short height can still cause damage or injury.
- When using a non-metallic snow rake, be aware that roof snow can slide at any moment. Keep a safe distance away from the eave to remain outside of the sliding range.
- Buried skylights pose a high risk to workers on a roof removing snow. Properly mark this hazard as well as other rooftop hazards.

Methods of Snow Removal

Below are some recommended methods of snow removal that allow the qualified individual to remove snow safely and minimize risk of personal injury and property damage.

- Removing snow completely from a roof surface can result in serious damage to the roof covering and possibly lead to leaks and additional damage. At least a couple of inches of snow should be left on the roof.
- Do not use mechanical snow removal equipment. The risk of damaging the roof membrane or other rooftop items outweighs the advantage of speed.
- Do not use sharp tools, such as picks, to remove snow. Use plastic rather than metal shovels.
- Remove drifted snow first at building elevation changes, parapets, and around equipment.
- Once drifted snow has been removed, start remaining snow removal from the center portion of the roof.
- Remove snow in the direction of primary structural members. This will prevent unbalanced snow loading.
- Do not stockpile snow on the roof.
- Dispose of removed snow in designated areas on the ground.
- Keep snow away from building exits, fire escapes, drain downspouts, ventilation openings, and equipment.
- If possible, remove snow starting at the ridge and moving toward the eave for gable and sloped roofs.
- In some cases a long-handled non-metallic snow rake can be used from the ground, thereby reducing the risk. Metal snow rakes can damage roofing material and pose an electrocution risk and should be avoided.
- Upon completion of snow removal, the roofing material should be inspected for any signs of damage. Additionally, a quick inspection of the structural system may be prudent after particularly large snow events.

If you have any additional questions on this topic or other mitigation topics, contact the FEMA Building Science Helpline at FEMA-Buildingsciencehelp@fema.dhs.gov or 866-927-2104.

You may also subscribe to the FEMA Building Science e-mail list serve, which is updated with publication releases and FEMA Building Science activities.

Subscribe at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSFEMA/subscriber/new?topic_id=USDHSFEMA_193

Visit the Building Science Branch of the Risk Reduction Division at FEMA's Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration at <http://www.fema.gov/building-science>.

Please scan this QR code to visit the FEMA Building Science web page.



WINTER DRIVING SAFETY



READY YOUR VEHICLE FOR WINTER WEATHER

- **Get a tune up.** Make sure everything in your vehicle is in working condition: ignition, battery, transmission brakes, spark plugs, filters, fan belts, etc.
- **Keep your tires inflated.** Because of low temperatures and icy roads, you run a heightened risk of flats. Adequate tire pressure will help prevent them.
- **Top up your fluids.** Your vehicle should always be flush with oil, antifreeze, and especially, windshield wiper fluid.
- **Use the right tires.** If you live in a hilly region where road conditions are unpredictable, installing winter tires with added traction may be necessary.

STORE THE ESSENTIALS

- **Things to keep you warm.** Keep blankets, boots, and cold weather clothes in your trunk in case of a breakdown.
- **Flashlights and flares.** Use these tools to alert other motorists of your presence in case of an emergency. Matches and extra batteries for the flashlights are a good idea, too.
- **A fully-inflated spare tire, tripod jack and wrench.** These should always be in your car if you get a flat, but in winter the need is especially immediate.
- **Tools to keep the snow at bay.** Don't leave home without your ice scraper and snow brush. You really won't want to have to use your hands.



KNOW HOW TO DRIVE IN SNOWY CONDITIONS

- **Maintain an increased stopping distance.** With the added risk of slides and spinouts, stay farther away from other vehicles than you would during other seasons: around 8 seconds between your car and others.
- **Handle hills correctly.** Don't flood the gas at the crest of a hill, let your inertia bring you to the top. Never stop mid-way up a hill.
- **Don't brake too quickly or forcefully.** This will cause you to lose traction and cause steering wheel lockup.
- **Accelerate slowly.** Hitting the gas when the road is slippery will cause you to skid and lose control. Ease into every acceleration.

KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH GETTING STUCK IN A SNOW DRIFT OR BREAKING DOWN.

- **Don't run the engine.** Tempting to keep warm in frigid weather, but if your exhaust pipe is clogged, you run the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- **Don't try to push your car out of the snow.** This could lead to overexertion or worse, the car might drift in your direction.
- **Stay in your car.** The nearest gas station may not seem far, but if weather conditions shift, just ten minutes outdoors could lead to exposure.
- **Call for help.** Ignite a flare, or tie a bright colored cloth on your antenna to indicate you are in need of help.

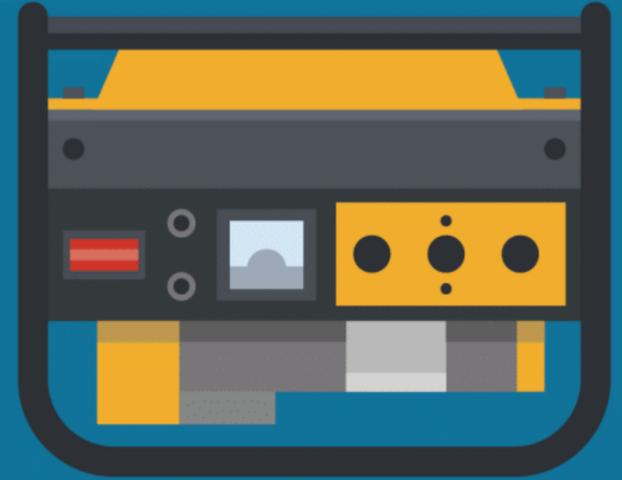


KEEP YOUR FAMILY & PETS SAFE

Safety Tips for Generators

Do not use generators indoors or in confined, poorly ventilated areas. Keep them outside, away from buildings and anything flammable, even dry brush.

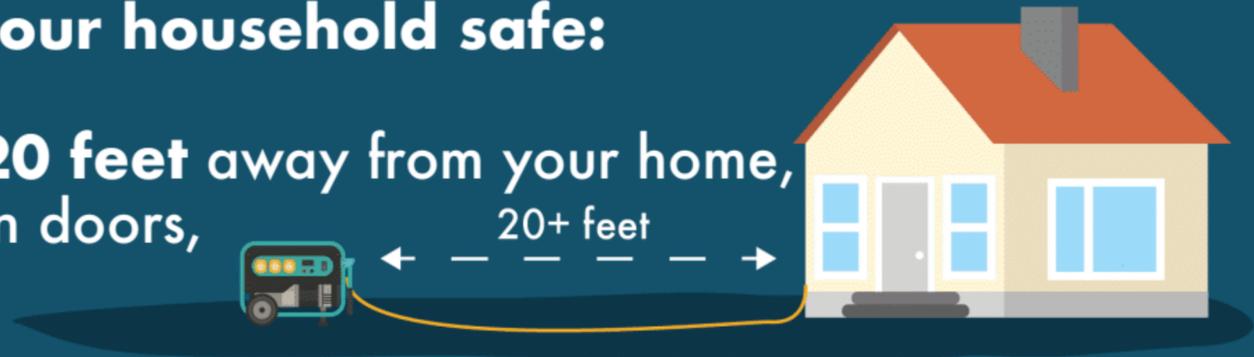
Fumes from a generator can be dangerous for you, your family or pets.



Check with neighbors and family to ensure they are aware of the risks of operating generators.

If you are using a generator for any reason, this information can help keep you and your household safe:

- Place generators at least **20 feet** away from your home, downwind away from open doors, windows and vents.
- Before refueling it, turn off the generator and let it cool for **15-20 minutes**.
- **Never** try to power the house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet; instead, use a heavy-duty, outdoor extension cord to plug appliances into generators.
- **Do not** use generators in rain or wet conditions.
- Place a fire extinguisher nearby.
- Make sure your home has operating fire alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.



Learn about carbon monoxide from the CDC at cdc.gov/co/ or call 800-232-4636



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