

Jan. 27, 2014
#140127-COLDWTR

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Winter Storm Update #1

National Weather Service Forecast

- Santa Rosa County is currently under a Winter Storm Watch, meaning snow, sleet or ice accumulations are possible.
- Temperatures are forecasted to freeze tonight and reach a high in the mid 30's on Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 28 & 29.
- Freezing rain may cause ice accumulations of .1 to .25 inch early Tuesday morning switching to sleet and possible snow on Tuesday afternoon in the northern area of the county and along the coast by early evening Tuesday.
- Impacts include dangerous travel conditions, broken tree limbs and power outages.

Closures

- Santa Rosa County Schools are closed Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 28 & 29, including before and after school activities.
- Santa Rosa County offices and the library system are closed Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 28 & 29.
- Courts in Santa Rosa County are closed Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 28 & 29.
- Santa Rosa County Health Department is closed Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 28 & 29.

Actions Taken by the County

In preparation for the low temperatures, Santa Rosa County has taken the following steps:

- A local state of emergency was enacted at noon Jan. 27. Declaring a local state of emergency allows the county to make formal requests to the state and FEMA for assistance if needed.
- The emergency operations center is at a level two, or partial activation with essential staff, until 6:30 p.m. on Monday and will resume at a level two at 7 a.m. Tuesday until further notice.
- The Citizens Information Line is open. Citizens may call (850) 983-INFO (4636) with questions.
- The American Red Cross is on standby to open a public warming shelter if needed for any long-term power outages.

Roads & Bridges

- Public works has sand on standby to place on roadways. Staff will monitor our bridges during the freezing rain, sleet, and snow periods to determine when or if it is appropriate to apply sand. If a bridge is deemed by staff or law enforcement to be unsafe to cross because of the layer of ice, barricades will be placed until sand and/or scraping takes place and the bridge is passable again.
- Any road closures will be announced as they occur.

Cold Weather Shelters

- If the temperature cannot be maintained at your home, make temporary arrangements to stay elsewhere, including with friends and family. Two cold weather shelters for the homeless and those who are not able to maintain heat in their homes are available Monday- Wednesday:
 - Ferris Hill Baptist Church located at 6848 Chaffin Street in Milton and
 - Community of Christ Church located at 2111 Presidio Street in Navarre

- The shelters will open on the following dates and times:
 - Monday night - those who would like to stay at the shelter must arrive between 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
 - Tuesday night – shelter opens at 5 p.m. and closes at 9 a.m. Wednesday.
 - Wednesday night - those who would like to stay at the shelter must arrive between 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- The shelters are for people who are homeless or heatless, can care for themselves, and are not at risk to themselves or others. No one will be admitted to the shelter that is under the influence of drugs or alcohol and are unable to walk unaided or are disoriented.

Cold Weather Safety

- Citizens are urged to remember the five P's of cold weather:
 - **Protect People:** Remember to dress in layers and wear a hat and gloves. It is important to try to stay out of the wind and to stay dry. Also, remember to check on young children and the elderly family and neighbors who are the most sensitive to cold weather. If the temperature cannot be maintained at a home, make temporary arrangements to stay elsewhere, including with friends and family or at one of the cold weather shelters.
 - **Protect Pets:** If cold weather is in the forecast, be sure to bring outdoor pets inside or give them a warm shelter to stay in.
 - **Protect Plants:** Cover cold sensitive plants to protect them from the dangerous temperatures.
 - **Protect Pipes:** Cover pipes and allow outdoor faucets to slowly drip to prevent from freezing and breaking.
 - **Practice Fire Safety:** Use safe heating sources indoors. Do not use fuel-burning devices such as grills; they release carbon monoxide, which is a deadly gas. Also, make sure to use space heaters according to their instructions and be attentive to open flames. In the event of long-term power outages, be extremely careful when using generators, lanterns, gas powered appliances or when cooking on charcoal grills or gas grills. These appliances produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide which is a deadly, invisible and odorless gas that can cause poisoning in only a matter of minutes. Equipment or appliances that produce carbon monoxide should never be used indoors. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not stop carbon monoxide build-up.

Driving Safety

Ice and possible snow on most roadways is expected. Santa Rosa County Emergency Management asks residents to take special precautions when driving:

- Drive according to the conditions on the road. Remember bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads will freeze first.
- Allow extra time to get to your destination.
- Keep your distance. The distance needed to stop on ice is twice as long as under normal driving circumstances. Keep at least a three-car distance from the vehicle directly in front of you.
- Don't use cruise control on icy roads.
- To avoid skidding break gently and if your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake. Applying pressure to your brakes while on ice will cause a vehicle to skid. Brake only during your approach.

General Safety Information

- www.santarosa.fl.gov or follow us on Twitter at @SRCBOCC
- Please monitor your home weather radio and local media outlets for the most up-to-date information.
- Your best defense in any disaster is a NOAA Weather radio.
- Citizens can sign up to automatically receive breaking news alerts from Santa Rosa County Emergency Management via e-mail or as a text message on their cell phone at: www.santarosa.fl.gov/emergency/publicwarning.html.
- Santa Rosa County Division of Emergency Management's latest all-hazards disaster guide is now available online at www.santarosa.fl.gov/news/factsheet/2013%20Disaster%20Guide.pdf or at county offices and libraries, local chambers of commerce, and local retailers

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