

# From the Director: December. It's Cold

December 14, 2009

Last month [I wrote about getting ready for winter](#). Now it's here. It stays dark later in the morning, and gets dark earlier in the afternoon. And it's cold.

This winter, like any other, we have to be prepared for the worst that Nature throws at us. Last December, a major ice storm paralyzed the southern part of our state. As bad as it was for us, it was many times worse for our neighbors in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. And, we have already experienced what could easily have been a serious Nor'easter.

For us, the measuring stick for winter storms remains the January Ice Storm of 1998. But just two winters ago, record snows capped off with an April blizzard pounded Aroostook County, exhausting the financial resources – and patience – of even those stalwart folks.

All those preparations [I talked about last month](#) are important to remember this December as we head into the heart of winter. And, there is a wealth of preparedness and safety information at [MainePrepares](#). As always, when the cold winds blow, it is most important that we make sure the most vulnerable among us can stay safe and warm.

## For all of us:

- For the holidays, consider some practical gifts that can help in an emergency. Crank up weather radios, flashlights or cell-phone chargers might very well prove more welcome than the latest video.
- Check often on friends and relatives who might be too proud to ask for help
- If you or a friend are running low on fuel and need help, try not to wait too long to ask for assistance. It is much easier and cheaper to arrange assistance, and schedule fuel deliveries during business hours, Monday through Friday
- Always, dial 2-1-1 to find out about resources in your area that might be able to help with fuel.

## Businesses:

- Winter storms may interfere with both sales and supplies or merchandise deliveries. Can your business bridge the gap?

- Winter can also bring delays in propane, or sometimes fuel oil supplies. If your business depends on one of these fuels, keep a close eye on your supply.
- Your customers rely on you for their well-being. Will you be there for them when they need you?

## Officials:

- 211 Maine is a great source of information for Maine people. Check out your town contact information, especially your after-hours contacts, at [211maine.org](http://211maine.org), to make sure your information is up to date. If you know of other sources of help in your area, make sure they are listed as well. Call 211 to provide the information if it is not there.
- Does your town have a formal – or informal – program to check on shut-ins, or those with a disability? If you have a sign-up process for this service, this is a good time to remind folks about it.

Ice storms? Tough economic times? The [H1N1 flu](#)? This could be a tough winter. If we do some thinking and preparing ahead of time, and if we all look out for each other, we can handle whatever Mother Nature throws our way. And spring will be here sooner than we think.

Please, [contact me](#), and let me know your thoughts.

Sincerely,

[Rob McAleer](#), Director, Maine Emergency Management Agency