

Winter Weather Preparedness Bulletin

Health & Medical Stakeholders

The Texas Panhandle region is prone to winter weather impacts. Amarillo receives an average of 17.9 inches of snow annually during winter months. In addition, the Texas Panhandle can experience extreme cold temperatures, especially associated with the passage of cold fronts that move through the region from the northern Rocky Mountains and Plains states.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently issued the U.S. Winter Outlook that indicates a cooler and wetter winter across the southern U.S. due to the potential formation of the El Niño phenomenon in the Tropical Pacific. While this is simply an indication of what winter may hold, it serves as a reminder of the importance of preparing in advance for winter weather impacts.

Before Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

- Review internal winter weather plans, ensuring information is up-to-date and current.
- Review medical, food, support, snow removal, and other equipment and supplies to ensure adequate stockpiles and readiness (i.e. supply chain logistics). Make sure to include vendors and contractors in the review.
- Test emergency power and communication redundancies in case of a utility outage.
- Provide employees with winter weather preparedness information to enhance readiness and improve availability.

During Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

- Implement internal winter weather plans early to stay ahead of winter weather impacts.
 - Prepare the current shift to stay late if the oncoming shift is delayed.
 - Plan ahead and bring in the oncoming shift early if needed to avoid delays.
 - Consider lodging arrangements for out-of-town employees.
 - Review surge contingency plans in the case of an MCI caused by winter weather.
 - Review contingencies to accommodate general population that may seek shelter in facilities.
- Monitor the National Weather Service, Amarillo for information on current conditions, watches, and warnings... <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ama/> or call (806) 335-1121.
- Monitor WebEOC and OEM Wx SITREP e-mails for current information on winter weather impacts and emergency operations. Contact the OEM Duty Officer to coordinate any assistance needs created by the winter weather's impact.
- Monitor local media and other sources for closures; anticipate impacts that closures may create on your operations.

After Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

- Learn from every storm. Restock your emergency supplies to be ready in case another storm hits.
- Assess how well your supplies and plan worked. What could you have done better?
- Take a few minutes to improve your plan and supplies before the next winter storm hits.
- Share your experiences and tips with each other.