

News Release



News Release

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#100211-WINTSRM2

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Winter Storm Update #2

The National Weather Service has issued a winter storm warning, meaning a build up of snow, ice or sleet is possible for Santa Rosa County. Snowfall of up to three inches south of I-10 and two to four inches north of I10 is possible on Friday, February 12. Road conditions may be extremely hazardous. Residents are urged to stay off the roads if possible. The public is also asked to monitor the local media for the latest weather conditions and information.

School/Office Closures for Friday, February 12

- The offices of the Board of County Commissioners are closed. Regular operating hours will resume on Monday, February 15.
- Supervisor of Elections, Tax Collector, Clerk of the Court and the court system are closed and reopen on Monday, February 15.
- Public schools in Santa Rosa County are closed. School will resume on Tuesday, February 16.
- The University of West Florida will be closed, but will have weekend activities.
- All base facilities will be closed on Friday, to include: The Whiting Field Golf Course, Wings Club, Child Development Center; Fitness Center, Navy Exchange Main Store, Bachelor's Quarters Mini-Mart, Commissary, and Pen Air Federal Credit Union. The Branch Health Clinic will remain open Friday morning for all scheduled appointments, but will close at 1200 noon for all services, including the pharmacy. The Whiting Pines Mini-Mart will remain open during their normal operating hours. Weather permitting, the base will reopen for all normal operations at 7 a.m., Saturday, February 13.
- Pensacola Junior College Milton Campus is closed.

Actions Taken by the County

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

- The emergency operations center is at a level three or monitoring phase.
- Emergency management and public works staff are on standby to respond as needed.
- Public works has sand on standby to place on roadways. Any road closures will be announced as they occur.
- The American Red Cross is on standby to open a public warming shelter if needed for any long-term power outages.

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 **through Sunday**:
 - Ferris Hill Baptist Church, 6848 Chaffin Street in Milton
 - Billory Baptist Church, 8162 Stillwater Cove in Holley
 - Thursday night ONLY, both shelters will open at 5 p.m. and close at 9 a.m. on Friday morning.

Black Ice Safety

Black ice could be a hazard throughout the weekend, even after the storm passes. Black ice forms when the air temperature is warmer than pavement, which causes moisture to rapidly freeze and create a thin, transparent layer of ice on the roadway. It can be one of the most dangerous conditions on roads as it is invisible and can catch drivers off

guard and at full speed, resulting in loss of vehicle control. Drivers can increase safety by observing the following tips:

- Be aware that black ice is almost invisible.
- Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses and tunnels and in early morning when the air temperature is rising faster than the pavement temperature.
- Never brake while driving on ice. Applying pressure to your brakes while on ice will cause a vehicle to skid. Brake only during your approach.
- 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.

General Driving Safety

Snow and ice 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 travel roads will freeze first.
- Allow extra time to get to your destination.
- Don't use cruise control on icy roads.
- Reduce your speed and leave plenty of room to stop. There should be at least three times the normal amount of space between you and the car in front of you.
- To avoid skidding break gently if your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.
- Put extra distance between you and the car in front of you.
- If your car starts to slide, turn your wheels in the direction it is sliding to straighten it out.
- Turn on your lights to see and be seen.
- Clear snow and ice off the headlights, tail lights, mirrors and license plates.
- Stop the car when necessary to keep the windows clear.
- Check the windshield wipers to make sure they are not frozen to the windshield.
- Slow down. Wear seat belts. Never drink and drive.

General Safety

- Citizens are urged to remember the five P's of cold weather- protect **people**, protect **pets**, protect **plants**, protect **pipes** and **practice fire safety**.
- 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 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.

More cold weather tips and information on what to do before, during and after a wide variety of disasters can be found the county's disaster guide available online at <http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/emergency/disasterprep.html>.

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