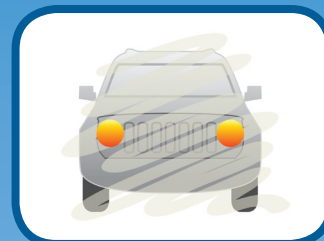


BE WINTER-READY



Laois County Council



(1) The Home

- Have a good supply of non perishable, easy to prepare food
- Have an adequate supply of heating / cooking fuel and if possible a suitable alternative should the main supply fail
- Have torches / batteries should the power supply fail
- Have candles and matches available. Store appropriately and never leave a burning candle unattended
- Have a water container to ensure a supply of drinking water
- Have a shovel and a bag of salt for clearing paths
- Know how to turn off the water supply
- Ensure your home / water tank are well insulated
- Call on elderly relatives and neighbours regularly. Ensure they have sufficient supplies of food / fuel / medication etc. For more information see section 13 of this leaflet and Visit www.laois.ie

(2) Personal Safety

- Keep sufficient stock of essential medication
- Keep warm, eat well and avoid unnecessary travel
- Eat regular hot meals and drink plenty of fluids, this will keep you warm and will give you energy to keep active
- Wear well fitted shoes with non-slip soles
- Try to limit outside walking during the cold weather
- Consider wearing a personal alarm so that family and friends are alerted when required
- Have emergency contact details to hand (next page)
- Don't be afraid to contact for help if required
- For more information see section 13 of this leaflet and Visit www.laois.ie

(3) Water Shortages

- To prevent stopcocks from freezing, open the stopcock chamber and remove any water. Fill the chamber with nonabsorbent material to provide insulation. Do not use absorbent material as it will freeze when wet
- Do not leave taps running as this merely wastes resources
- If you are leaving your property unattended for a period of more than a day or two, you should cut off the water supply to the property from the external stopcock (while ensuring that any water-dependent appliances or facilities are also shut off)
- For more information see section 13 of this leaflet and Visit www.laois.ie

(4) Avoiding Frozen Pipes

- Ensure all exposed pipes are adequately insulated. This includes pipes in the attic where the attic floor has been well insulated
- Insulate or wrap a towel around outside taps
- Leave a light on in the attic
- Consider opening the attic trap door to allow heat in
- Leave heating on for longer periods at lower settings
- Warmth offers the best protection against frozen pipes so keep warm
- Frozen mains water supply – if your supply is frozen, be cautious with the use of heating systems, back boilers, washing machines or other water-dependent appliances or facilities
- For more information see section 13 of this leaflet and Visit www.laois.ie

(5) Water Leaks

- Water supply in vacant premises and holiday homes should be shut off and drained down in preparation for winter
- Key holders - check premises regularly for possible leaks If a leak is detected;
- Turn off water supply –stop valve is usually under the kitchen sink
- Turn on cold taps to drain the system
- Turn off central heating
- Turn off electricity supply if leak is near electrical appliances
- Call a qualified plumber
- For more information see section 13 of this leaflet and Visit www.laois.ie

(6) Clearing Snow (see legal advice on next page)

- Clearing snow can be demanding work - only undertake the task if you are reasonably fit and do not have an underlying medical condition
- Clear snow or ice early in the day if possible
- Wear sturdy, insulated, waterproof footwear with good gripping soles
- Use a shovel. There are special shovels for this task but any garden shovel will do
- Make a path down the middle of the area being cleared so that you will have a clear surface to walk on
- Never use boiling water to clear snow (it may re-freeze and cause the formation of black ice)
- You can prevent ice forming by spreading salt on the area that you have cleared
- When you are clearing snow it is important that you don't create an obstacle for pedestrians or traffic. Ensure that the snow is removed to a location that won't create a hazard



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT www.laois.ie

Laois County Council Severe Weather Hotline: **1890 837 273**



(7) Clearing Snow

Legal Advice for Snow Clearance and Gritting

The Office of the Attorney General has advised that liability does not arise when snow is cleared from footpaths in a safe manner.

In relation to people gritting roads with grit supplied by the local authorities, the legal advice is that the issue of liability does not arise where the material is delivered, stored and used in a safe manner and does not cause hazard.

- For more information see section 13 of this leaflet and Visit www.laois.ie

(8) Flooding Advice

- Move valuables and other items to safety. Place them above the flood level or upstairs
- Put sandbags at any openings where the water could gain access
- Turn off gas and electricity
- Have warm clothing and wellingtons ready
- Have medication to hand (if needed)
- Co-operate with emergency services and local authorities. For your safety you may be evacuated.
- Don't try to walk or drive through floodwater
- If possible avoid contact with floodwater as it may be contaminated or polluted
- Take care if you have to walk through shallow water – manhole covers may have come off and there may be other underwater hazards that you can not see
- Never try to swim through fast-flowing water – you may get swept away or struck by an object in the water

(9) Flooding Advice

- Move your car to high ground if possible
- Remember that floodwater could get into your garage so move any chemicals or fuel to ensure that they do not spill into the floodwater and cause an additional hazard
- Weigh down any manhole covers with sandbags or heavy objects. These could open during a flood and cause a hazard
- Close off the flow valves on propane tanks, oil drums, or other fuel containers that supply your home through pipes and fittings
- Unplug any exterior electrical connections such as outdoor lighting, pond pumps and filters
- Be prepared to evacuate your home or business. Protect yourself, your family and others that need your help
- For more information see section 13 of this leaflet and Visit www.laois.ie

(10) Road safety

- Get your vehicle serviced to ensure it is fit and safe
- Carry out regular checks on the vehicle
- Check for wear and tear on wiper blades and replace them as soon as they start to smear rather than clean windows
- Keep tyre pressure at the manufacturer's recommended level
- Replace tyres if necessary - check your tyre tread depth - the minimum legal limit is 1.6mm, however, for winter driving 3mm is advised
- Make sure all vehicle lights are working and clean
- Ensure the vehicle has adequate levels of anti-freeze coolant and screen wash
- Check your vehicle battery
- Keep torch, blanket, High visibility vest, shovel, tow rope, warm clothing, and spare mobile phone charger in the car.
- For more information see section 13 of this leaflet and Visit www.laois.ie

(11) Farming

- Have a supply of gritting material available to allow access to and from the farmyard
- Insulate any exposed pipes
- Taps left running at a low rate to keep water flowing in order to reduce the likelihood of pipes freezing should only be considered where there is an on-farm supply source. This option cannot be used if the water is supplied by the Local Authority or Group Scheme
- Install a thermostatically-controlled heater in plant rooms which should cut in when the temperature reaches 1°C.
- Grit sloped yards and roadways to facilitate traffic
- Herd out-wintered livestock during daylight hours and be back before nightfall
- Keep away from hazardous areas and rough terrain
- Bring a mobile phone when going out herding or on other journeys
- For more information see section 13 of this leaflet and Visit www.laois.ie

(12) Business Sector

- Preparing Your Business for Severe Weather
- For more information see section 13 of this leaflet and Visit www.laois.ie
- A practicable checklist for the business sector that outlines the key issues to address, in order to ensure business continuity during severe weather events, is available on www.djei.ie and www.forfas.ie

(13) Be Winter-Ready Booklet

The booklet can be downloaded from the website www.winterready.ie

An Irish language version is also available. Copies are also available by emailing the Office of Emergency Planning at oepp@defence.irlgov.ie or telephone **1890 252 736**

(14) Contact Information

- Laois County Council
057 8664000
- Laois County Council Severe Weather Hotline
1890 837 273
- If you have an emergency and need the Emergency Services dial **999** or **112**

(15) Personal Contact Details

Doctor _____
Chemist _____
Local Garda Station _____
Fuel Supplier _____
ESB Emergency No: **1850 372999**
Bord Gais Emergency No: **1850 205050**
Add as appropriate

