10 Essentials For Survival Heating During A Blizzard

It only takes one blizzard, excessive ice on power lines, or a computer board failure in the furnace system to leave you without heat at time when you need it most.

And if you look around these days, you can easily imagine what a holiday at the North Pole feels like, so heating is the last thing you would want to lose. Here are some things you can do to make sure you stay warm in a time when it may be difficult or impossible to use your primary heating system method.

1. Understanding How Heat Moves Around Your Home

Before you begin planning how to heat your home in a crisis, find out what kinds of advantages and limitations you are dealing with first: oddly shaped rooms, hallways, doors, and other structures can change the flow of air, and thus heat through your home. In some cases, the answers may surprise you and lead to changes in how you get the most out of alternative heating method placement.

Here are some things you should know about and experiment with:

- If you have central heating, make sure that you know which order heat is delivered to the registers. Usually, the registers closest to the furnace will receive hot air first, while those further away may receive cooler air, si take advantage of register order. Instead of closing off a room that is very close to the boiler, use it more and close off rooms that are further away.
- Take temperature readings at different heights, around

corners, and in other odd room or hall arrangements, to make a good idea of how air enters and exits each room, then you can see how the temperature changes are affected by that air current. In some cases, using a small fan in one area will push the heat further into the room instead of building up in a corner. If you have cats, check where they are inclined to nap that aren't directly related to air registers: these will be warm spots or have warmer drafts that you can take advantage of.

- Find out where and how cold drafts influence the way heat moves through so you would know how to use alternative methods that may not supply as much heat. If the drafts are pushing air inward, put your heating source in front of the draft so that it moves the warmed air in along with the cold. You should still try to limit these drafts because the supply of colder air coming in is endless, while the heat produced by your system is limited.

2. Electricity and its Role in Winter Heating

Maybe you have plenty of oil or other heating fuel, you made sure all furnace heating system and maintenance needs were taken care of, and even have a "smart" thermostat or other "smart house" technologies that ensure is at an optimal temperature every room.

All this can lead you to believe you can't lose your primary source of heat, but you would be wrong.

Than 2 Days!

The more complicated your heating system is, the more likely it is the system relies on electricity. The amount of electricity required to run blower fans, pump fuel into the furnace, ignite the fuel, and carry out other activities may be more than you provide.

If you don’t already have a tested system in place for generating power off-grid, then blizzards, ice storms, and other events will lead to serious power disruptions. Unless you can generate sufficient power, or your heating system does not require electricity, you must take into account alternative heating methods.

3. Preparing for an Electrical Outage

It can take years of trial and error, plus a range of equipment to generate enough electricity to live off the grid.

If you are especially low on funds, and need to prepare for winter power outages now, buy a generator, or household scale batteries that can be charged and stored away for use during a storm. Your best option will be alternative fuels and heating devices, as well as good information on how to make the use of it.

4. Alternative Fuels to Have Onhand

If you are already reeling over the cost of home heating fuels such as wood, coal, oil, and gas, then you might wonder how to afford alternative fuels. You can make some from household junk and you can buy other in small quantities and store away for a time of need.

Here are three alternative fuels that will work in just about

any situation so long as you have adequate ventilation and can safely manage a fire.

Newspaper Logs

This is one of the easiest and cheapest to make: take newspapers, junk mail, and just about anything else made of paper (try to avoid glossy, plastic, or heavily dyed pages as they will smell bad when they burn) and tear it up into shreds. Next, soak the paper in water for a few days to make it as soft as possible.

To make the brick shape, set the papers into a pan and squeeze the water out. Once the bricks are dry, you can burn them just as you would wooden logs.

Candles

It is best to buy a wide range of candle sizes that can be used for different locations and needs. For candle heaters and similar radiative devices, you can use tea lights and votives. If you want to heat up a smaller area and get more light at the same time, use a taper.

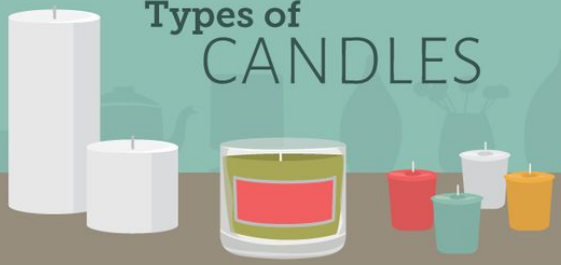
Seven Day Candles or the larger jar candles may not offer much in the way of heat or light. Aside from the fact that many of these candles are made with thinner wicks that don’t work well, the heat from them is usually trapped by the jar itself.

You can also make candles from just about anything that has fat or wax in it. This includes tubes of chap stick, cans of vegetable shortening, sticks of butter, crayons, or anything else that you can get some kind of wick into.

For smaller “candles” you can use toothpicks or other splinters of wood. Rolled up paper will work well for shortening can candles and others that are larger in size.

Everything You Need to Know About Making Your Own Candles

Types of CANDLES



Pillar CANDLE | Container CANDLE | Votive CANDLE

Choosing a WAX

Paraffin Wax
Petroleum

- Quick Burning
- Creates Smoke
- Easily Colored
- Easily Scented

Used in votive candles

Natural Wax
Beeswax, Palm Wax, and Soy

- Slow Burning
- Smokeless
- Not Easily Colored
- Not Easily Scented

Used in pillar and container candles

Making the CANDLE

Use a drop of wax to adhere the wick to the center of your mold

Loop the end of the wick around a pencil and rest it across your container while pouring the wax

Melt the solid wax by putting it into a glass measuring cup, then placing the cup into a saucepan with 2 inches of boiling water

Pour the melted wax into the mold (caution, measuring cup will be hot). Allow up to 24 hours for the wax to cool

Cut the wick and light your homemade candle!

FIX

Rubbing Alcohol

Even though it takes a lot of experience to make wood, or rubbing alcohol, you can still buy it at a fairly low price. Just purchase a bottle or two each time you go shopping and store it away for a time of need.

5. Easy Devices You Can Buy or Build

You should have one kind of stove for each fuel that you are setting aside. Paper logs may be the easiest and cheapest fuel to make, but they will be useless if you have no safe place to burn them. Burn them in an outdoor open barrel, or set up a wood stove indoors with a proper chimney system. Even though you can do quite a bit with lengths of stovepipe, they must still eventually attach to a suitable chimney.

Remember, down drafts and other problems can truly make burning these kinds of fuels indoors an art form. While dampers in the stove pipe may alleviate some of the problem, it still takes a bit of work and maintenance to use these systems safely and to the maximum benefit.

Here are some smaller, easy to manage devices that you can make or purchase for other kinds of alternative fuel:

Candle Heater

You can purchase prefabricated heaters made of clay flower pots, or you can make your own. If you decide to assemble your own, be sure to use zinc free washers, nuts, and bolts.

When heated, metal hardware with zinc in it can give of toxic fumes. Since the candle heater can raise temperature of the metal to several hundred degrees, it will not be worth your safety and well being to use fittings that have zinc in them.

During the winter months, it is also very important to periodically dry out the ceramic pots in an oven. This will reduce the moisture content and ensure that heat will flow through the pots more easily.

If you choose to make your own candle heater, do not forget to include a saucer cap on top of the flower pot array. Once the candle heater is going for about an hour, you will have more than enough heat to warm up food and beverages in heat safe bowls.

I do not recommend large, or heavy cookware. Anything light and thin that transmits heat easily will suit your needs better.

Rubbing Alcohol Stove

As with candle heaters, you can also purchase prefabricated rubbing alcohol stoves. Or, if you have some soda cans onhand, you can make one from those. Since rubbing alcohol stoves are very efficient, do not be surprised at the amount of heat you will get from such a small device and a relatively small amount of rubbing alcohol. Do not forget you can also put a metal tripod over the rubbing alcohol stove and use it for cooking. Overall, the rubbing alcohol stove will be more efficient in this area than the candle heater.

Propane Stove

Even though propane bottles cost more than rubbing alcohol, propane devices are very useful for emergency situations. Propane stoves or heaters can be used for cooking meals, as well as providing heat.

Depending on the cylinder size and the setting of the stove or heater, you may get just a few hours from each cylinder or much more.

6. Backup Systems to Consider

If you have more time to work with, devise other systems that can be used without burning various kinds of fuel. You will also need to find a way to transport the heat into each area of interest to you.

Compost Pile

Did you know that a medium to large compost pile can produce enough heat to warm up water in pipes buried in the pile? All you need to do is take a coil of plastic pipe and fill it up with water.

Regardless of the temperature outdoors or the weather conditions, your compost pile will always be producing heat at the core level. To get some of that heat into the house, continue the plastic line into your home and then pump the water around the room and back out to the compost pile again.

You can also add water radiators with metal fins to disburse the heat more readily as the water is piped around your home. Try to limit your pump size to ones that will run on a 12 volt battery.

In an emergency, just keep a fresh and fully charged car battery or other deep cycle battery on hand to run the pump.

Solar Can Heater

If you have a sunny spot on a rooftop or in your yard, then you can generate a good bit of heat with a solar can heater since these devices only require an insulated box with a glass covering. Inside the box, set up series of plastic pipe, and then encase the pipes in cans.

After the main system is built, you can either run water through the pipes, or simply let hot air from the pipes vent

into your home.

As with the compost pile, pumping water in will also give you the advantage of having hot water on hand in a time when none may be available because of the weather situation.

7. Managing Your Woodpile

When it comes to managing your wood pile, make sure the wood stays as dry as possible. If you are concerned about being trapped indoors during a blizzard or other severe weather, keep as much wood as possible near the house.

Keeping enough wood chopped and ready to burn for at least three weeks will always be to your advantage. You can also try to find a place in your home to supply at least one weeks worth of heat so that you can stay indoors as much as possible.

CHOOSING THE BEST WOOD FOR YOUR STOVE

GOOD HEAT

ASH
Steady flame
Good heat output
Best when seasoned at least one year

BEECH
Dense wood
Burns clean and hot
Best when seasoned one to two years

BLACK LOCUST
Slow to burn
Burns clean and hot
Good heat output
Best when seasoned at least one year

HAWTHORN
Slow to burn
Good heat output

SUGAR MAPLE (RECOMMENDED)
Burns efficiently
Good heat output
Good flame
Best when seasoned at least one year

SLOW BURN

APPLE
Slow and steady burn
Small flame size
Does not spark or spit
Best when seasoned at least two years

CHERRY (RECOMMENDED)
Slow to burn
Burns at medium heat
Sweet burning aroma
Best when seasoned at least one year

ELM
Dense, hard wood
Slow to get going
Best when seasoned two years

OAK (RECOMMENDED)
Dense wood
Slow to burn
Low flame
Best when seasoned one to two years

WALNUT
Slow to burn
Limited smoke
Best when seasoned at least one year

YEW (RECOMMENDED)
Slow to burn
Good heat output
Sweet burning aroma
Best when seasoned two-three years

FAST BURN

ALDER
Burns fast
Poor heat output
Sweet burning aroma
Best when seasoned at least one year

CHESTNUT
Burns easily
Burns at low heat
Heavy smoke

POPLAR
Poor burn
Heavy smoke

SYCAMORE
Good flame
Moderate heat
Best when seasoned at least one year

GOOD FOR KINDLING

BIRCH
Quick to burn
Burns bright and hot

CEDAR
Easy to burn
Low heat output
Heavy smoke and spark

PINE
High sap content
Messy to burn

QUADRA-FIRE
NOTHING BURNS LIKE A QUAD

Many people don’t realize that you can burn less fuel without losing out on a lot of heat efficiency. Bank the fire every few hours so that the existing heat has a chance to circulate. Once the fire is burning well, don’t add other materials such as paper or cardboard.

If you are going to burn these materials, do so when you aren’t planning to burn wood until the embers from the other material are in a condition where they can be banked.

You can revive them easily enough with wood, however mixing fuel types can make the fire burn too fast or too slow and cause it to be less efficient.

8. Managing Oil and Other Fuel Lines

If the temperatures get cold enough, fuel lines might freeze up. Make sure that you know how to thaw the lines out safely, as well as how to tap the main tank so that you can keep some fuel onhand indoors.

Have a valve installed so that you can cut off the main fuel line, and attach a line inside the house that will draw from a bucket of fuel. Just be sure to monitor the system each time it is burning for the sake of safety and fire prevention.

9. Passive Methods for Pacing Fuel Consumption

You can block off windows at night, and then open the shades during sunlight hours to let heat in. Running ceiling fans can also help push warm air back down into the room where you need it most.

In the most extreme situations, you can also pitch a tent in one room of your home and stay in it to conserve as much body

heat as possible. Take the time now to practice using candle heaters and other devices outside the tent, as well as how to get the most from them in a time of need.

Remember that hot food and beverages can also go a long way to preserving your core body temperature. Even if you cannot heat up a whole room using alternative methods, you may still be able to warm of food and beverages that will help you avoid freezing to death.

10. Emergency Survival Kit

Overall, building an emergency heating survival kit is not especially difficult. Here are the most important items to have onhand:

- candle heater and candles
- rubbing alcohol stove and fuel
- hair dryer or other heat source for thawing water pipes
- additive that can be mixed with heating fuel to prevent freezing in the first place
- matches or other means of starting a fire
- emergency heat retention blankets
- tent
- plenty of water for hydration
- foods and beverages that can be heated up
- solar powered coffee mug or other devices that can be used to heat up water or soup without using electricity or a fire.

At this time, there is more debate than you might expect about whether or not the planet is heating up or cooling down. If you have ever seen the way ice melts in a beverage, then it may be easier to understand why some data points one way, while other studies indicate the opposite.

Regardless of how or why, the fact remains weather patterns are becoming more extreme, which means that you need to all

you can to prepare for extreme cold and situations where your primary heating system fails.

Having a few devices and alternative fuels onhand may not seem like much, but it is more effective than doing nothing at all, or simply hoping for the best!