



Stay safe and informed  
in snowstorms



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# Be weather aware

Freezing rain, ice pellets, snow squalls, white-outs, heavy snow, and high winds can cause extensive delays and inconvenience but they can also bring with them damage, power outages and life-threatening conditions.

Take the time to know what to watch for, and what to do if there is a weather watch or warning issued for where you live or where you are traveling to.

Emergency preparedness starts with you  
**winter safety**

- Add warm clothes & blankets to your emergency kit
- Bring your pets inside during cold weather
- Stay connected by radio, TV or online

[ontario.ca/beprepared](http://ontario.ca/beprepared) Ontario

# 6 tips on preparing for severe winter weather

## 1 | Don't wait for a storm to hit

Most winter storm systems are forecast well in advance. Prepare ahead of time and you'll be able to react quickly when a storm arrives. Have a Home Emergency Survival Kit (also known as a 72-hour kit) stocked and ready, and in a place where it can easily be accessed.

Emergency Kit | [getprepared.gc.ca](http://getprepared.gc.ca)

## 2 | Pay close attention to the weather

Some types of nasty winter weather like snow squalls can develop very quickly. Be sure to regularly check weather conditions.

## 3 | Travel safely

Give your car a winter tune-up in mid-autumn and have your snow tires installed early in fall. Assemble a vehicle emergency kit including basic items like high-energy snacks, a flashlight or road hazard light, new batteries, gloves/mittens, hat, a blanket, and warm gel packs.

Vehicle Emergency Kit  
| [getprepared.gc.ca](http://getprepared.gc.ca)



## 4 | Dress for the weather

Winter storms and high wind chills can be hazardous. Be aware of worsening conditions and always dress to suit the weather. Wear a hat and thin layers of loose clothing with water-repellent and wind-resistant outer layers. Watch carefully for symptoms indicating hypothermia: shivering, confusion and loss of muscle control. Frostbite can occur in minutes; watch for numbness or whiteness on ears, nose, fingers and toes.

## 5 | Respect travel advisories and road closure notices

If local emergency responders are advising you to stay inside and not travel – follow that direction. Take cover inside and stay there until the storm has subsided and the danger has passed. Staying off the roadways as directed allows emergency responders and snow removal crews better access.

## 6 | After-storm conditions can pose hazards too

Downed tree limbs and power lines can be dangerous. Blowing snow can still pose driving risks as visibility may still be affected. Be extremely cautious if you tackle tree removal yourself! Even falling ice and snow can be deadly.



# What is a significant weather event?

Ontario Regulation 239/02, of the Municipal Act 2001 (Minimum Maintenance Standard for Municipal Highways), permits municipalities to declare a significant weather event when:

- A significant weather event is approaching, or occurring;
- The weather hazard has the potential to pose a significant danger to the users of the highways, which the municipality has authority over;
- Environment Canada has issued an alert under the Public Weather Alerting Program.

This declaration suspends the standard timelines required for municipalities to meet their winter maintenance objectives until the municipality declares the significant weather event has ended. In each case, during the course of a declared significant weather event, the standard for addressing winter maintenance is to monitor the weather and to deploy resources to address the issue starting from the time that the municipality deems it safe to do so.

When the County or a municipality has declared the event has ended, the standard timelines for winter maintenance activities will begin. However, it takes time following a significant weather event to clear roadways completely.



**Chronology of a Significant Weather Event (SWE)**



**Weather Warning by Environment Canada**



**SWE Declaration by the County and/or Local Municipality**



Use Caution: even when an SWE has ended, roads may still be snow covered and dangerous.

Public Weather Alerts, as issued by Environment Canada include, but are not limited to the following:

- Blizzard Warning
- Flash Freeze Warning
- Freezing Rain Warning
- Snow Squall Watch
- Blowing Snow Advisory
- Freezing Drizzle Advisory
- Snowfall Warning
- Winter Storm Warning

The declaration is to notify the public that due to the current or forecasted conditions, caution is to be observed when travelling on Perth County roads and that it may take longer than usual to bring the condition of the roads back to a state that is safe to travel.

Perth County is required to notify the public when a significant weather event has started and or ended. Communication delivery includes websites, social media and news release. *See page 6 for details.*



# Road and weather communications

Perth County has three types of roads: Local Municipal (Lower-Tier); County (Upper-Tier), and; and Provincial (MTO)

Each road type has its own maintenance requirements which is dependant also on the individual road class. Each type of road also has differing sources of information. Listed below is a summary and description of the resources and road information in Perth County.

## Local Municipal Road Information (Lower-Tier)

*Updated by local public works divisions to include road conditions, closures and construction information on municipal roadways.*

Municipal 511 | [municipal511.ca](http://municipal511.ca)

Municipality of North Perth | [northperth.ca](http://northperth.ca)

Township of Perth East | [pertheast.ca](http://pertheast.ca)

Township of Perth South | [perthsouth.ca](http://perthsouth.ca)

Municipality of West Perth | [westperth.com](http://westperth.com)

## Perth County Road Conditions and Closures (Upper-Tier)

*Updates on county road conditions and closures on a best effort basis. Also construction and load restriction information.*

Municipal 511 | [municipal511.ca](http://municipal511.ca)

Perth County | [perthcounty.ca/roadconditions](http://perthcounty.ca/roadconditions)

Twitter | [twitter.com/perthcoroads](https://twitter.com/perthcoroads)

## Provincial (MTO) Road Conditions and Closures

*Information on provincial highways and road conditions and access to an interactive map with still imagery angles of select portions of MTO roads.*

Ontario 511 | [511on.ca](http://511on.ca)

## OPP West Region

*Road closure and accident information for County roads under their jurisdiction. Also includes closure information for MTO roads.*

Facebook | [facebook.com/OPPWest](https://facebook.com/OPPWest)

Twitter | [twitter.com/OPP\\_WR](https://twitter.com/OPP_WR)

## Stratford Police Service

*Road closure information for The City of Stratford, Town of St. Marys, and Township of Perth South.*

Facebook | [facebook.com/SPSmediaoffice](https://facebook.com/SPSmediaoffice)

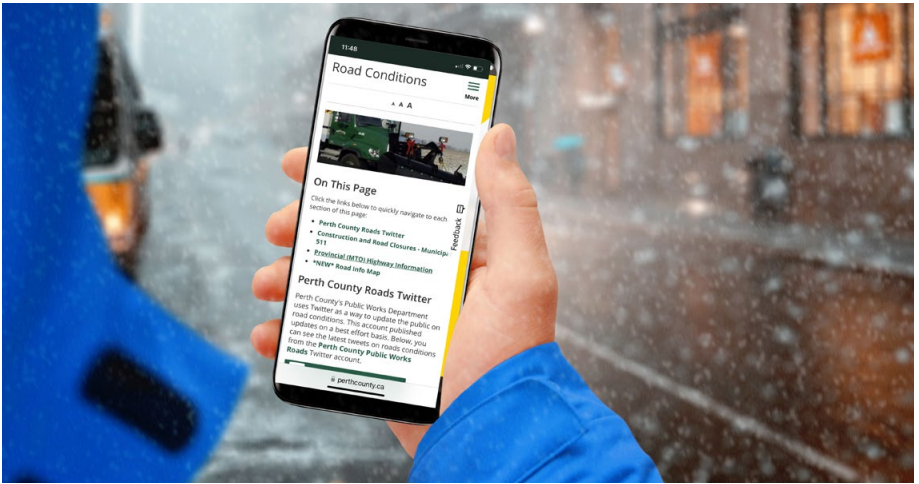
Twitter | [twitter.com/SPSmediaoffice](https://twitter.com/SPSmediaoffice)



**Perth County Road Info Map** | [perthcounty.ca/GIS](http://perthcounty.ca/GIS)

Interactive Story Map allows users to click roads and learn more about who maintains the roads along with links to direct questions or concerns to the proper road authority. Includes information about County, MTO and local roads.









# Severe Weather Notices

Perth County is no stranger to a wide range of weather conditions, which could differ based on where you are at any given time. Perth County, and the lower-tier municipalities have plans and procedures in place to respond and manage the impacts of severe/extreme conditions throughout the year. Some of those conditions may include blizzards, extreme cold or heat events, wind storms and tornadoes.

*There are 4 levels of alerts/notices. The type of alert used depends on the severity and timing of the event.*

 <b>Special Weather STATEMENT</b>	 <b>Weather ADVISORY</b>	 <b>Weather WATCH</b>	 <b>Weather WARNING</b>
<p>Risk of weather hazard in the next 7 days</p> <p>Could pose a threat to life/property</p> <p><b>Prepare a plan of action</b></p>	<p>Weather hazard is occurring, imminent or likely</p> <p>Could cause significant inconvenience</p> <p><b>Use caution</b></p>	<p>Risk of weather hazard in the near future</p> <p>Could pose a threat to life/property</p> <p><b>Have a plan of action</b></p>	<p>Risk of weather hazard in the next 7 days</p> <p>Poses a threat to life/property</p> <p><b>Take protective action</b></p>





## ❄️ **Special Weather STATEMENT – a “Heads Up”**

Special Weather Statements are intended to advise the media and the public of not so common, inconvenient, or unusual weather conditions, or for the longer-term potential development of hazardous weather conditions. These are issued to let you know that conditions are unusual and could cause concern. They provide a heads up of what weather may be coming.

### **When are these used?**

- To express uncertainty when there is a reasonable chance that a weather event has more impact than currently implied by the current forecast. Example: an approaching weather system which has a history of producing numerous severe thunderstorms; or an intense winter storm which could produce heavy snowfall overnight, creating dangerous conditions for the morning commute.
- To highlight significant weather that may affect major events with heightened media attention. For example, snow and cold wind chills for the Grey Cup.
- To highlight significant weather in cases for which a warning is not normally issued. For example, widespread fog with near-zero visibilities.
- To give a broader scope to a local weather event. For example: “Blizzard conditions have developed in Montana. Although extreme southern Saskatchewan may be brushed by the storm, it will generally remain south of the international border.”
- To highlight and explain unusual weather such as cold air (cold core) funnels, waterspouts, and dust devils.
- To highlight and report the unusual duration of a specific weather phenomenon, for example, days with/without rain.



## ❄️❄️ Weather ADVISORY

Weather advisories cover a wide array of deteriorating weather conditions. These bulletins are issued for specific weather events (like blowing snow, fog, freezing drizzle and frost) that are less severe, but could still significantly affect Canadians. They also can be issued preceding watches and warnings — as is the case with funnel cloud advisories — or they can be issued to indicate severe weather in a long-term forecast.

## ❄️❄️❄️ Weather WATCH

Watches are issued when there is the potential for severe weather. Watches alert you about weather conditions where there is potential for the development of significant storms or severe weather. As certainty increases about the path and strength of a storm system, a Watch could be upgraded to a Warning. A Winter Storm Watch is usually issued 18 to 36 hours in advance of the approaching bad weather.

## ❄️❄️❄️❄️ Weather WARNING

Severe weather is occurring or will occur. These alerts are updated regularly so that you can stay informed and take appropriate action. As an example: A tornado warning would mean a tornado is occurring, has occurred, or is about to occur and those in the area/region should take cover immediately.

Environment  
Canada |  
[weather.gc.ca](https://weather.gc.ca)

To help you be better prepared for inclement weather where you work, live or play and to respond accordingly, Environment Canada monitors and forecasts weather 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.





# Winter alerts

*Winter alerts can be categorized into three basic categories, each of which can occur in combination with another.*

## Precipitation alerts:

- **Snowfall / Significant snowfall**  
Deep snow on roads can happen quickly
- **Snow squall** When cold air moves across larger open bodies of water, lakes or rivers creating nearly stationary bands of cloud and snow
- **Freezing rain / Freezing drizzle**  
When rain or drizzle falls onto sub-zero surfaces and freezes on contact forming a layer of ice
- **Rainfall - significant rainfall**  
Pooling on roads
- **Winter storm** Issued when multiple types of severe winter weather are expected to occur together

## Cold alerts:

- **Extreme Cold** Extremely cold temperatures or very low wind chill values
- **Flash Freeze** Issued when a rapid drop in temperature causes water from rain or melted snow on streets, sidewalks etc. to quickly freeze

## Poor visibility alerts:

- **Blizzard** Issued when winds are expected to create blowing snow giving widespread reduced visibility of 400 metres or less
- **Blowing Snow** Issued when winds are expected to create blowing snow giving poor visibility of 800 metres or less



Perth County's Emergency Management Program is a unified program for the County, and municipalities of North Perth, Perth East, Perth South, and West Perth.

The City of Stratford and Town of St. Marys have their own programs, coordinated through their respective fire departments and work closely with the County's Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) on projects and initiatives.

The program is aligned with the Province of Ontario's risk-based approach to management and response of emergencies and is comprised of the following five interdependent foundational components: Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. These five components are implemented by all emergency management practitioners and organizations in Ontario to ensure a safe, secure and resilient Ontario.

# Perth County

Emergency Management

Perth County Emergency Management  
480 Douro, Stratford, ON N5A 0E6

Community Emergency Management Coordinator  
t 519-271-0531 ext 540 e [cemc@perthcounty.ca](mailto:cemc@perthcounty.ca)

[perthcounty.ca](http://perthcounty.ca)   