



## WINTER READINESS

### SPONSORED BY UPLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Edward M. Mitchell, President  
Sandra Miazza, Councilwoman  
Leland Hunter, Councilman  
Daniel Smith, Councilman  
Linda Mitchell, Tax Collector  
John Easton, Police Chief

Christine Peterson, Vice President  
Harold R. Peden, Councilman  
Moira Crawford, Councilwoman  
Michael J. Ciach, Mayor  
Shirley Purcival, Borough Manager  
Nelson Ocasio, Deputy Police Chief

Upland Borough Council would like to supply you with some winter readiness tips for your garden, home, pets and winter emergencies.

## Winter Gardening Tips

Just because the weather is cold, doesn't mean the ground is frozen. The ground takes longer to cool off than the air does. As long as the ground is not frozen and can accept water, you can water your evergreens and shrubs. Most of the other plants are fairly dormant by now and not using much water. Evergreens and several types of shrubs need water to keep their needles all winter and can lose water through these needles.

The threat of damage from snow and ice is always near. When snow piles up on your shrubs or trees, gently brush them off. Don't shake the branches as this may cause them to break. If the snow is frozen on the branch and will not brush off, it is best to let it melt naturally, to avoid damage to the tree or shrub.

If tree limbs break due to the weight of the snow or ice, it is advisable to have the broken limb removed as soon as the weather permits. Hanging branches can be a danger to passing pedestrians. Also, the tree will be able to heal the wound better in spring if the wound has clean edges instead of ragged tears.

Sometimes in the middle of winter we suddenly get warm days. For the most part, this is not a big problem but you may need to check on a couple of things. If you covered your roses with rose cones, you may need to ventilate the cone to prevent heat from building up inside. The same should be done with cold frames. Remember to close the vents as the temperature drops again at night.

Don't forget to keep your holiday plants fresh and blooming. Most of our blooming holiday plants prefer to be in a cool room. This keeps the plant in flower longer. Most holiday plants also need a bright room.

Also, don't store firewood in the house. Insects can come in with firewood and firewood should never be treated with insecticides.

And this is a fine time of the year to plan ahead for your spring garden, whether it is a rain garden, a shade garden, a vegetable garden or just your family's flower garden and thinking of the planting season to come, makes the winter months seem less prolonged.

## Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

One of the primary concerns during the winter months is to have the ability to have heat and power services. Before a winter storm you need to be prepared with an emergency kit, in case you have to leave your home. You should have the basic necessities such as water, food, prescription drugs, flashlight and extra batteries, local maps and don't forget your pet's needs. Please have ready your pet's food, water, crate, sanitation supplies, favorite toys and their prescriptions.

Always remember to stock up on rock salt or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways. Many commercial products are safe for the environment and for pets. Also, you may want to check to make sure that your snow equipment is in good condition before that first snowfall.

If you have oil heat, you may want to make sure you have a sufficient supply of fuel oil. During many a heavy snowfall oil companies will not make deliveries until the roadways are cleared. Wood burning stoves are only to burn dry seasoned wood and you may want to stock up on wood for the upcoming season.

Your vehicle also needs to be checked before the winter months occur. Antifreeze levels may need to be topped off, check your battery and ignition system, fuel and air filters may need to be replaced and always make sure your heater and defroster are in good working condition.

During a winter storm or extreme cold temperatures please stay indoors. Walk very carefully on snowy, icy walkways. Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack, which is a major cause of death in the winter. If you must shovel snow, stretch before going outside.

Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses all of its insulation value and transmits heat rapidly. Keep dry and watch for signs of frostbite. The symptoms of frostbite is a loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes or the tip of your nose. If these symptoms appear seek medical help immediately. Don't forget to cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs if you are working outside in cold temperatures.

Also in the cold months of winter you need to watch for signs of hypothermia. These include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and exhaustion. Any person that may be experiencing these symptoms should get into a warm location, remove all wet clothing, warm the center of the body first and give warm, nonalcoholic beverages and seek medical attention.

If the household pipes freeze, remove any insulation or layers of newspaper and wrap the pipe in towels or rags. Completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they were most exposed to the cold or where the cold was most likely to penetrate.

When you use a kerosene heater you must be careful of buildup of toxic fumes. Refuel kerosene heaters outside and keep them at least three feet from flammable objects. To conserve energy keep your home cooler than normal during extremely cold weather.

## Winter Driving Tips

Always make sure that when you are driving in the bad weather that you are also dressed for emergency situations, such as wearing or having gloves, hats and a blanket in your vehicle. Let family or friends know where you are going, if heading out on a trip and have a disaster kit in your vehicle for emergencies. You should have a shovel, scraper and small broom in your vehicle, along with a flashlight, tow chain or rope and snack food and water.

If you are stranded on the highway, pull off the roadway and turn on your hazard lights and hang a distress flag from the window or radio antenna. Remain in your vehicle where rescuers are most likely to find you. Do not set out on foot unless you can see a building close by that you may take shelter. Be careful as distances are distorted by blowing snow. And do not walk far in deep snow.

You may also run the car engine and heater for about ten minutes each hour to keep warm. When the engine is running open a window slightly for ventilation and periodically clear the snow from the exhaust pipe. This will protect you from possible carbon monoxide poisoning.

You can exercise to maintain body heat but avoid overexertion. If your family members or friends are with you, you may take turns sleeping so that one person is awake at all times to look for rescue teams.

Being careful with your battery power is also important so that you will have to balance using your lights, heat and radio sparingly. Turn on and off the inside lights so that work crews or rescuers can see you at night time.

## Winterizing Your Home

Please make sure your home is insulated from the attic to the basement, caulking and weather stripping doors and windows are an excellent way to keep the cold weather outside. Also installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic helps keep the heat inside.

Clear out rain gutters and repair roof leaks. Cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other exterior structures on your property. And check your chimney and have them inspected yearly. All fuel burning equipment should be vented to the outside and kept clear.

Keep fire extinguishers on hand and make sure everyone in your home knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk in the winter months since many people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.

You may want to hire a contractor to check the structural ability of a roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from accumulations of snow. Also check drains on flat roofs and make sure that they are all clear of debris.

Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane or charcoal burning device inside of your home, garage, basement or any partially enclosed area. Using these items may cause serious carbon monoxide issues.

All houses should have carbon monoxide alarms in centrally located areas of your home and on every level of your home. If the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, quickly move outside in the fresh air and open a window or door upon your exit from the building. Once you are outside remain there and call emergency personnel.

## Winter Pet Care

Many people believe that because their pets have a coat of fur that they are able to withstand the cold better than humans. This is not the case. Like us, animals are accustomed to the warmth of indoors and cold weather can be as hard on them as it is on us.

If you are using a space heater or a fireplace, watch your pets closely. They are attracted to the warmth so make sure their tails or paws do not come in contact with flames, heating coils or hot surfaces, as that can cause burns. A pet can also knock over an auxiliary heat system.

Please keep your animals inside as much as possible during the extreme cold weather. When they go out, stay with them and if you are cold enough to want to go in, your pet may be ready to come inside also. Also, be careful if your pet is outside where there may be antifreeze residue in a driveway. If your pet appears to have drank any of it, immediately contact your veterinarian for treatment. An animal that has drank antifreeze may appear to be drunk, not being able to stand and must be treated within four to eight hours of this happening or it can be fatal.

Your pet's health may be affected by how long they can stay outdoors. Animals with certain health issues such as diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease and hormonal issues can be compromised by staying outside too long. The very young and the very old animals are especially vulnerable in the cold weather. The cold is very hard on their joints and the animal may become stiff and tender. This may limit their ability to climb steps and may cause them to slip, causing more injury to the animal. Stiff and arthritic pets can experience significant injury if they slip on the ice, so be aware of their condition when they go for their walks.

Long haired breeds, like Huskies, do better in the cold weather than do short haired breeds or cats or small dogs. These small animals must wade through the snow and feel colder quicker than larger animals. You may want to consider putting sweaters or special booties on them so that the body heat stays with them longer.

When outdoors with your pet you may watch for signs of exposure to the cold if the animal is whining, shivering, appearing anxious, looking for a place to burrow or slowing down or stopping. If you see these signs you must get your pet inside immediately.

If an animal suffers from frostbite their body gets so cold it pulls all the blood to their extremities to the body's core to stay warm. An animal's ears, paws and tail can get so cold that ice crystals form and tissue is damaged. Sometimes frostbite is not noted on an animal for days and once discovered you must seek veterinarian attention immediately.

Animals can also suffer from hypothermia. This happens when an animal spends too much time outdoors during cold weather or when an animal with poor health or circulations problems exist. In mild cases the animal will shiver and show signs of depression, lethargy or weakness. As the condition progresses muscles will stiffen, the heart and breathing rates slow and the animal will stop responding. You must get your pet indoors and warm by wrapping it in a blanket and then contacting your veterinarian for immediate treatment.

**Upland Borough Council wishes you and yours a happy, healthy and safe Winter Season.**