



WINTER WEATHER SAFETY

Living in Indiana, we get to enjoy the beauty of changing seasons. Also, we should expect some harsh winter weather and be prepared. Continue reading for tips on how to have a healthy and safe winter:

- Winter weather can sometimes cause power outages that may last for several days. Be prepared by having an emergency kit ready. Supplies should include water, non-perishable food, and medicine. Also include a flashlight, batteries, a first aid kit, personal sanitation items, and cell phone chargers. Visit www.ready.gov/kit for more tips on how to build an emergency kit for your family!

- Be prepared for dangerous road conditions. Sign up for local weather alerts on your phone and check current travel conditions before leaving home. Consider making an emergency kit for your car.

Supplies should include:

- Water and snacks
- An extra set of warm clothing



- Blankets
- Jumper cables
- First aid kit
- Cell phone chargers
- Flares or reflective triangle
- Bag of sand or cat litter for traction
- Shovel, ice scraper, snow brush
- Flashlight and batteries
- Toolbox
- Tow rope

And don't forget to keep a full gas tank!

- Use caution with generators and portable space heaters. When used incorrectly, generators can cause fires, electrocutions, carbon monoxide poisoning or death. With generators, remember:

- **NEVER** use a generator indoors, inside a garage, or in a basement.
- Always keep generators at least 20 feet away from home.
- Make sure the generator has 3 to 4 feet of clear space on all sides for ventilation.
- Do not operate generators in wet conditions.
- Store fuel away from stoves, and never store fuel inside the home.
- Plug appliances directly into generator using grounded cords.

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Follow these safety tips when using space heaters:

- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heater.
- Never leave space heater turned on while unattended. Turn off heater when leaving the room or sleeping.
- Plug space heater directly into a wall. Never use an extension cord. Never use heaters with damaged cords.
- Place heater on flat surfaces on the ground only.
- Never use a cooking stove to heat your home or dry your clothes.

- In the winter, use of generators, space heaters, and other heat sources can increase the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas. It is produced by gas and oil burning appliances, generators, and charcoal grills. Exposure to high levels can cause illness or death. To stay safe, follow generator and space heater guidance, never run your car or truck inside a garage with the garage door closed, and install carbon monoxide detectors near sleeping areas inside your home*. You can buy these from hardware and general merchandise stores.

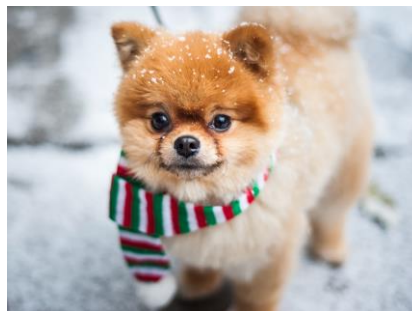
For more information, visit Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) webpage [Carbon Monoxide Basics](#).

Interested in carbon monoxide poisoning data? Visit CDC's Environmental Public Health Tracking [Data Explorer Tool](#)!

*Marion County residents are required to install carbon monoxide alarms in homes with non-electric appliances and fireplaces. See [Chapter 10](#) of The Code of the Health & Hospital Corporation of Marion County for more information.

- Don't forget about your furry friends this winter! Remember to bring pets inside when it's cold out. If you can't bring them inside, provide them with a warm, safe shelter. It should protect them from the cold and wind. They need access to fresh (non-frozen) water, and a thick straw bed to stay warm. Blankets can hold moisture and draw heat away from the animal. Don't forget to include pet supplies in your emergency kit!

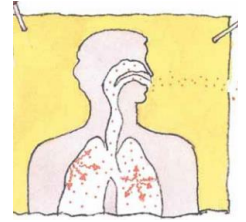
*Animals must be brought indoors when the temperature is below 20°F or there is a wind chill warning. Visit [Indianapolis Animal Care Services](#) for more information.



- Shoveling snow can be good exercise. But, it can be dangerous for those who don't exercise or have certain health issues. It adds extra stress on the heart. To protect yourself, wear appropriate clothing. Stay hydrated and pace yourself. Also, know the signs of a heart attack.

NATIONAL RADON ACTION MONTH

January is National Radon Action Month! Radon is a radioactive gas that causes cancer. It comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil. Radon is estimated to cause thousands of deaths each year. Breathing air with radon can cause lung cancer. In fact, the Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States today. Only smoking causes more lung cancer deaths. **If you smoke and your home has high radon levels, your risk of lung cancer is especially high.**

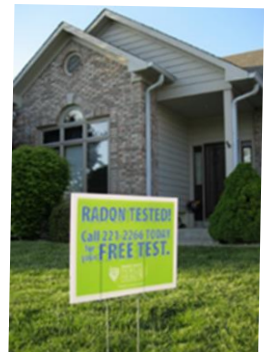


Radon can be found all over the United States. Learn more about radon levels across the county by going to [CDC's Data Explorer Website](#), then select radon in the Content Area. Radon can get into any type of building—homes, offices, and schools—and result in a high indoor radon level. But you and your family are most likely to get your greatest exposure at home, where you spend most of your time.



Radon comes from the natural decay of uranium that is found in nearly all soils. It usually enters your home by moving up through the ground to the air above. Then, it gets into cracks and other holes in the basement or foundation. Your home traps radon inside, where it can build up. Any home may have a radon problem. This means new and old homes, well-sealed and drafty homes, and homes with or without basements. Radon from soil gas is the main cause of radon problems. Sometimes, radon enters the home through well water.

Odorless and colorless, you cannot smell it, see it, or taste it. Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon. EPA and the Surgeon General recommend testing all homes below the third floor for radon. Testing is inexpensive and easy—it should only take a few minutes of your time. Many Hoosiers have already tested their homes for radon. The Marion County Public Health Department provides free radon testing to all Marion County residents. To request a free test, call 317-221-2266 or fill out the online form at marionhealth.org/radon/.



If you have already tested your home, you can talk to a health department indoor air specialist about your results. If your home has high levels of radon, the indoor air specialist can discuss different ways to lower it. One option is a subslab depressurization system, shown in the photo to the left. They can also direct you to the list of Indiana certified radon mitigators. You should also test your home again after it is fixed to be sure that radon levels have been reduced. Radon mitigation systems include a monitor that will show whether the system is operating properly. Homes must be retested after remediation systems are installed. Also, it's a good idea to retest your home every two years to be sure radon levels remain low.

Again, here are some things you can do during **Radon Action Month**.

- Test your home. For a FREE Radon Test, call 317-221-2266 or visit <https://marionhealth.org/radon/>
- Spread the word! Tell your friends and family to have their homes tested for radon.
- Buy a radon-resistant home. If you are buying a new home, ask about radon-reducing features. Also, consider testing as part of your home inspection.
- Learn more about radon by visiting these websites for more information:

[EPA's Radon Page](#)

[American Lung Association Radon Page](#)

[Marion County Public Health Department Indoor Air Quality Program](#)

[Indiana Department of Health Radon for Homeowners](#)

HOLIDAY PARTY FOOD SAFETY

One of the best parts of celebrating the holidays is feasting with friends and family! Prevent foodborne illnesses (“food poisoning”) with these tips:

- Keep raw meats and eggs separate from other foods.
- Use a food thermometer to ensure that meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs are cooked to a safe internal temperature. Roasts, chops, steaks, and fresh ham should rest for 3 minutes after you remove them from the oven or grill.
- Keep food out of the “danger zone.” Germs can grow quickly in the danger zone between 40°F and 140°F. After preparing, keep hot food hot and cold food cold. Refrigerate or freeze perishable food within 2 hours (or 1 hour if food is in temperatures above 90°F, such as in a hot car). This includes meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, eggs, cut fruit, cooked rice, and leftovers.
- Use pasteurized eggs for recipes that call for raw eggs.
- Thaw frozen turkey in the refrigerator, in a sink of cold water (change the water every 30 minutes), or in the microwave. Do not thaw turkey or other foods on the counter.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:
 - Before, during, and after preparing food
 - Before eating food
 - After feeding pets
 - After using the toilet
 - After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
 - After touching garbage
 - Before and after caring for someone who is sick
 - Before and after treating a cut or wound
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

Visit FoodSafety.gov for more helpful tips!

YOUR MAP TO A FOOD-SAFE HOLIDAY

Follow some simple food safety advice to keep you and your guests feeling festive this winter.

PROPER PREPPING

Just as you have a procedure for storing your holiday gifts when you get home, you should have a system for storing your food.

- Make sure your fridge is set at or below **40 °F**. Chill perishable groceries within two hours of shopping.
- Store raw meats in a container or dish to prevent juices from leaking and get below ready-to-eat foods.
- Be sure to separate raw meat from ready-to-eat foods and dishes.
- Wash your hands for **20 SECONDS** with warm water and soap.
- Don't forget: You need two thermometers. One for the fridge to ensure food is stored at 40 °F. One for food, particularly meat, to ensure it's cooked to the right temperature.

WELCOME TO Roastville

Always use a food thermometer to check that different holiday meats have been cooked to the right internal temperature.

- GROUND BEEF 160 °F
- DUCK 165 °F
- TURKEY 165 °F
- GOOSE 165 °F
- VEAL* 145 °F
- PORK* 145 °F
- LAMB* 145 °F
- STEAK* 145 °F

YIELD

*Don't forget resting time! Beef, veal, lamb, and pork should rest for **3 MINUTES** before carving or consuming.

HITTING THE ROAD

If you're bringing a dish to a get-together with coworkers, family or friends this holiday season, make sure you are transporting food safely.

DANGER ZONE

DO NOT ENTER

Perishable food kept in the Danger Zone (between 40 - 140 °F) for longer than 2 hours should be thrown out.

KEEP COLD FOOD COLD

When transporting cold dishes, place items in a cooler with ice or gel packs to keep food at or below **40 °F**.

KEEP HOT FOOD HOT

Keep hot foods at or above **140 °F** by wrapping dishes in insulating bags or towels and newspaper.

EXCEPTIONS

In Danger Zone, include ready-to-eat items like cookies, crackers, bread, whole fruit.

USDA Ad Council

For more food safety tips, go to FoodSafety.gov

Need assistance this winter? Check out these local resources:

- The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) can help eligible people pay heat and electric bills. For more information, eligibility requirements, and application information, visit [Indiana Energy Assistance Program](#)
- Indiana211 helps Indiana residents find essential services, including warming center locations and winter coat programs. [Visit Indiana 211.](#)

Important Dates

Observances: National Radon Action Month (January)

MCPHD Offices Closed: 12/23 noon-12/25 Christmas
12/31/24 noon - 1/1/25 New Year's
1/20/25 Martin Luther King Jr. Day
2/17/25 President's Day

TAG (Technical Advisory Group) Meetings: 2/27/25 Held on Webex.

Tracking updates:

We're moving! We will be moving to a new website in spring 2025. Stay tuned for more updates!

*Marion County Public Health Department
Environmental Tracking*

<https://marionhealth.org/ephtracking/>
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