

LUCK FAVORS THE

Be ready for extreme weather and other disasters

This summer, the ocean unleashed its fury on our southern shores, flooding Houston, lashing Florida and plunging Puerto Rico into a darkness that still lingers. The fall set California ablaze with wildfires that are still burning in spots. And winter has plunged us into a bone-chilling, icy cold that threatens lives and pipes in much of the nation.

What do you do when Mother Nature starts throwing her weight around? You can start by visiting **Ready.gov**, a website of the Department of Homeland Security.

The site is full of useful information and resources to help you prepare for and respond to disasters, both natural and man-made.



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InSites

The section of the site that's most relevant now is called Winter Weather. It's easily accessible from the home page as one of six large photo links to the site's main sections. The other five main links are Wildfires, Home Fires, Severe Weather, Get Involved and Social Media.

The Winter Weather section focuses on the two main threats of winter: snowstorms and extreme cold. The information is arranged into three subsections telling you what to do before, during and after a snowstorm or extreme cold spell.

Being prepared before disaster strikes is stressed. There are

instructions on developing a family communications plan so everyone knows what to do and how to get in touch with each other if things get bad.

There's information on putting together emergency kits for your home and vehicle to help you ride out the crisis until it passes or help arrives. There are also tips on making sure your home and vehicle are prepared to weather the storm.

More tips give advice on how to dress and whether you should move or shelter in place. There are tips on safely shoveling snow and recognizing the symptoms of frostbite or hypothermia. There's also information on finding shelters if you don't have a safe place to stay and definitions of weather terms you'll hear on the news. Links to more infor-

mation and organizations that can help are also provided.

Other sections of the site provide general information on preparing for all types of disasters. How to get information on emergencies, how to prepare for people with special needs, what to do with pets, how to use and preserve technology and how to help others are all covered. It even tells you what to do in the event of a nuclear blast.

Ready.gov has a clean, easy-to-use design. It's definitely worth a visit because everyone, everywhere, can end up in the path of a disaster:

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