

Marks Remarks by Mark Rowen Lincoln County Educator 10-29-09

Now that we have had that first taste of winter, all of us need to take a short time to put our winter survival kit together. This kit can be the difference between being OK, stranded in a winter blizzard, or not. Each of the items is a suggestion; some may need to include special personal medication as extras.

The list starts with the items to help get you out of the stranded situation. These items will be gas treatment, booster cables, shovel, tire chains, tow rope, and kitty litter or sand. Other survival items are a flashlight and extra batteries, a sleeping bag or blanket, extra socks or boots, ski mask, a piece of bright colored cloth (about 2 feet square) for the antenna, matches, small hand can opener, metal can or cup, large metal coffee can (3 pound) to use as a heater, wire, rope or twine (enough to reach from the front of the car to the trunk), large candles (prefer none scented or vanilla), cans of solid fuel i.e. Sterno, large plastic trash bags for body heat retention (do not use next to skin), and non-perishable food, things like candy bars, dried fruit, soup packages, honey, beef jerky, etc. Other things to keep in the car include your cell phone charger, paper and pencil, and a can of flat tire fixer.

It is NEVER suggested to leave the shelter of a vehicle to walk for help. During a blizzard one can become disoriented for direction. Even if you can see lights in the distance, the wind could obscure them and you are now out in the open. The ability to keep out of the wind and stay warm is vital.

Just letting someone know the itinerary of your travels is also important. If you have an estimated time to arrive, this can be helpful especially if someone knows the route you are taking. Stopping occasionally and calling with an update can keep you awake and also keep loved ones from getting concerned.

Winter survival can be easy, just keep your wits and use your head. Travel safely. For more information on this or other topics, contact the Lincoln County Extension office at 764-2756.