

Powering a Safe, Fresh Start

January is more than a new page on the calendar — it's a chance to reset your routines, refresh your home's safety measures, and build habits that keep you protected throughout the year. By taking a few thoughtful steps now, you can enjoy winter with confidence and set the stage for a safe, strong year ahead.



Refresh Your Home's Winter Safety Basics

The start of a new year is the perfect time to reassess the everyday items that keep your home safe. Begin by testing all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, replacing batteries and checking expiration dates if needed. Look over fire extinguishers to ensure they are charged and accessible, especially in the kitchen and near heating equipment.

Next, inspect electrical cords, outlets, and power strips for fraying, discoloration, or warm spots — all signs of potential hazards. If you use space heaters, make sure they are placed on flat, stable surfaces with at least three feet of clearance from anything flammable. Take a moment to review your home's heating sources, too, and schedule routine maintenance if it's overdue. These simple check-ins help prevent winter accidents before they happen.

Stay Ahead of Extreme Weather

Winter weather can shift quickly, and being proactive helps keep stress at bay when storms arrive. Keep walkways, steps, and driveways clear of ice and snow to reduce slips and ensure safe entry for family members, visitors, or emergency responders. Stock up on essentials, including food, medicine, and pet supplies, so you're prepared if travel becomes difficult.



If you can, take a few minutes to winterize your vehicle by checking tire tread, wiper blades, and your emergency kit. Blankets, a flashlight, gloves, water, and a portable charger can make a huge difference in unexpected situations. Monitor local weather alerts to stay informed — early action can help you manage winter hazards with confidence instead of urgency.



Protect Your Home's Electrical Safety

Electrical safety habits form the foundation of a safe and calm winter season. Start by reviewing how outlets are being used throughout your home. High-wattage appliances like space heaters, microwaves, and hair dryers should always be plugged directly into wall outlets, never power strips or extension cords.

Keep electrical cords away from high-traffic areas, under rugs, or behind tightly-pressed furniture, where they can become damaged. Unplug chargers and electronics when not in use, both to prevent overheating and to save energy. If you decorate for winter, double-

check that lights and decor are rated for indoor or outdoor use as needed, and always turn them off before going to bed or leaving home. These mindful habits help create a safer home all year long.

Prepare Smartly for Outages

Cold temperatures, ice, and high winds can lead to unexpected outages, but preparation helps minimize disruption. Make it a habit to fully charge devices when winter storms are forecasted and keep flashlights and extra batteries in easily reachable places. A small stock of bottled water, shelf-stable food, and warm blankets can make outages more comfortable.

If you need to report a power outage, always do so through your SmartHub account or by calling SEI REMC directly. These are the only methods that immediately connect your outage to our system and dispatch process. Outages reported through social media or our website will not enter our outage management system and may delay restoration.

If you plan to use a generator, carefully review the manufacturer's instructions before an outage occurs. Operate generators only outdoors, far from windows and vents, and never use one inside your home, garage, or enclosed structures. A transfer switch installed by a licensed electrician is the only safe way to connect a generator to your home's wiring.

A Strong, Safe Start to the Year

With the right routines and a few intentional safety checks, your home and family can be well-prepared for winter's challenges. Taking time now to refresh your safety habits not only protects your household — it creates a calmer, more confident beginning to the year. Let this season of renewal inspire a thoughtful, safe start and carry that peace of mind with you throughout 2026.

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