Severe winter storms can cut off your supply of electricity and other winter fuels. It is important to have an alternative heat source available. However, be extremely careful in using fireplaces or wood stoves. Make sure they are properly ventilated to avoid the buildup of carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless, and deadly gas. Do not use charcoal indoors as it gives off large amounts of carbon monoxide. Have your furnace checked before the weather gets cold to make sure it is in good working order. Using alternative heat sources can also be a fire danger. Be very careful because if conditions are bad, the fire department may not be able to get to you. Make sure your smoke alarms are working and have fresh batteries. It is also a good idea to have carbon monoxide alarms in your home adjacent to sleeping areas.