

## Too Much Snow?

Difficulty:



Date of release:

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### *Discussion activities to be done after completing this EA lesson*

Today's report was about the problems which snow can cause, and offered some recommendations to people who find themselves in places where there is heavy snow. Which part of the US suffered badly from the effects of snow recently? How many snowstorms affect the US each year? Which difficult situations are mentioned in the report, and what advice is given?

### *Extension discussion topics*

#### **A. Talking about and going over the specific topic / idea / issue in listening text**

*Introduction = Snowstorms in the US, their effects, and how to prepare oneself for them.*

1. What do you remember from the report about the recent snowstorm in the US?
  - heavy, wet snow fell in October in New England, in NE US.
  - it was two-thirds of a meter deep in some areas.
  - almost three million people lost power, and at least twelve people died.
2. What general details can you give about US winter weather?
  - it generally snows in winter in the northern United States.
  - continental US has an average of 105 snowstorms each year.
  - an average snowstorm produces snow for two to five days.
  - snow often begins falling in November. (October snow was unusual and surprised people)
  - snow can be deadly, and is responsible for the deaths of 100s of people every year.
3. What recommendations are given for people who live in areas where it snows often?
  - they should stay in their homes until the storm has passed.
  - when removing large amounts of snow, they should stop and rest often, especially if they are older adults. (Difficult physical activity during snow removal can cause a heart attack)
  - in the home, they should prepare emergency supplies of food, clean water, medicine and power, even before winter begins.
  - in the car, they should keep food, emergency medical supplies and extra clothing.
  - if they become trapped in their car, they should: remain in or near the car unless help is near; turn the engine on for 10-15 minutes every hour for heat; open a window a little for fresh air; clear a space around the exhaust pipe to prevent the possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning. If in deep snow, they should tie a bright-colored object to the top of the car to increase the chance of rescue.

## B. Expanding on (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

*Topic = Heavy snow and the problems it can cause.*

1. Have you ever been in a snowstorm? When? Where? For how long? Tell the group or your teacher what it was like.
2. The report talks about people who die from being out in the cold. Have you ever been really, really cold? Tell the group about the time you felt the coldest you've ever been.
3. The report recommends that people prepare emergency power supplies at home. What would they be, and why would you need them? (pocket lamps / torches, spare batteries, candles). Tell the group about any time that you have needed such emergency power supplies at home.
4. Can you think of any other things that would be useful as emergency supplies that weren't mentioned in the report? What food would you make sure you had in your supplies?
5. Snow and ice on roads can be very dangerous, and they cause many accidents. Have you had personal experience of this, either when walking or when driving? What should people do / not do if they really must go out in such conditions?

*OR, Topic = Songs about snow.*

Find a song that you like that refers to snow, and present it to your group or your teacher. Find the lyrics (words) of the song and print them or put them on a screen. A Google search for "songs with snow in the title" will bring you websites like this one [http://www.figl.com/playlists/songs\\_with\\_snow\\_in\\_their\\_title1/](http://www.figl.com/playlists/songs_with_snow_in_their_title1/) Or you might prefer to present a song such as "Frosty the Snowman" or "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas".

## C. Extending discussion of (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

*Topic = Emergencies.*

1. What other emergency situations can be caused by the weather? (flood, drought, forest fire... Others?) Have you any personal experience of any of these?
2. Can you think of other natural or man-made disasters that lead to emergencies? (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, nuclear accidents. Others?) Give details of examples that you can remember.
3. Would you be prepared in an emergency? Do you think you would remain calm, or would you panic? Have you got emergency supplies at home? What? Have you got a "first aid kit" for a medical emergency? What is in it? Do you know your local emergency telephone numbers? Have you ever had to use them?

## *Audioscript*

Winter weather is returning to northern parts of the world. In the northern United States, winter can mean the return of snow. Some snow can begin falling in November. But large amounts of snow fell this past October, surprising many people. Almost three million people lost power and at least twelve people died when wet, heavy snow fell in New England. In some areas, the snow was two-thirds of a meter deep.

Each year, the continental United States has an average of one hundred five snowstorms. An average storm produces snow for two to five days.

Snow may be beautiful, but it can be deadly. It is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of people in the United States every year. Many people die in traffic accidents on roads that are covered with snow or ice. Others die from being out in the cold, or from heart attacks caused by too much physical activity.

You may not be able to avoid living in areas where it snows often. However, you can avoid becoming a victim of snowstorms. Most people are told to stay in their homes until the storm has passed. When removing large amounts of snow, they should stop and rest often. Difficult physical activity during snow removal can cause a heart attack, specially among older adults.

It is always a good idea to keep a lot of supplies in the home, even before winter begins. These supplies include food, medicine, clean water and extra power supplies.

Some drivers have become trapped in their vehicles during a snowstorm. If this happens, people should remain in or near their car unless they see some kind of help. They should get out and clear space around the vehicle's exhaust pipe to prevent the possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Drivers should tie a bright-colored object to the top of their car to increase the chance of rescue. Inside the car, they should open a window a little for fresh air and turn on the engine for ten or fifteen minutes every hour for heat.

People living in areas where winter storms are likely should carry emergency supplies in their vehicle. These include food, emergency medical supplies and extra clothing to stay warm and dry. People in these areas should always be prepared for winter emergencies. Snow can be beautiful, but it can also be dangerous.

This SCIENCE IN THE NEWS was written by George Grow and Christopher Cruise. June Simms was our producer. I'm Bob Doughty. And I'm Faith Lapidus.