

Precautions People With Disabilities Can Take During Bad Weather

By Andy Rausch and Joe Reinecker

Everyone hates bad weather. Sure, you'll run into the occasional person who says, "I love this weather," but everyone else sliding around on the ice, wrecking their cars and falling, aren't fans. Lately Kansas has seen its share of bad weather, and there may be more on the way.

Poor weather and the dangerous conditions it causes are problematic for everyone, but they can be especially tough for disabled people, many of whom are frail or have conditions that make them more vulnerable than most. The bad news is, cold weather is here to stay; it may go away for a couple of seasons, but it will inevitably come back. But there is good news, a silver lining. What is that, you ask?

There are things disabled individuals can do to prepare for bad weather and miserable conditions to make their situations slightly better. They won't magically fix everything, but they'll help.

"One very important thing people can do is to have their heating elements, whatever those might be, checked each year so they will know they're dependable and won't break down and leave them in a bad situation," explains Chanute Independent Living Coordinator Sharon Traylor.

Another thing people can do is to keep candles and flashlights (with batteries) on hand in case the power goes out.

Traylor also says disabled people should be wary of venturing out into potentially dangerous weather if it's not absolutely necessary. There are some disabilities, such as people who rely on crutches or have conditions rendering them fragile, that are especially dangerous in icy conditions.

Traylor also says having sufficient food on hand is important, and she stresses the importance of having an abundant supply of blankets.

Beyond these things, it should also be noted that you should pay close attention to the radio and television stations, when weather is bad to find out if offices are open those days.

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