

Are you ready for winter?

We have had a very mild fall with lots of dry warm weather, but winter is just around the corner! When you live in a rural and remote area, there is a lot to do and prepare for with the changing season. For people who have lived in the area for a long time, this planning is second hand. For those who are new to the region, here are some things to think about when you are planning.

Emergency Food Items To Consider:

- Case of bottled water
- Canned soup that doesn't need milk added
- Soda Crackers
- Canned milk
- Canned fruit
- Toilet paper
- Juice boxes
- Hard candy/chocolate
- Canned veggies
- Canned meat
- Instant coffee, powdered creamer
- Tea bags
- Hot chocolate
- Peanut butter
- Energy bars
- Freeze dried food

Heating Your House:

Having an alternative heat source is a very good idea – do not rely on an uninterrupted electrical supply for your only heat source. In 2006, many homes were without power for a week after a major snow storm. If wood heat is your primary heat source, here are some considerations:

- Always clean and inspect your chimney before use – call in a professional (or a neighbour) if you are unsure of what to look for
- The wood you use makes a difference (pine burns hotter than spruce). Poplar also burns hot, but really fast and produces a ton of ash. Ensuring the wood is dry and seasoned will help ensure your stove burns efficiently as well
- The efficiency of your stove matters – newer stoves (with catalytic converters) will burn much less wood than older stoves
- Energy efficient homes (plenty of insulation, few drafts, energy star windows etc.) will require less wood to heat
- Having a place to store a season's worth of wood is important – you may need more wood than you think. Plan on running your stove regularly from October to April. It is not uncommon for houses to use numerous pickup truckloads in a season.

- Cutting and chopping wood can be very labour intensive. Consider hiring someone if you lack the chainsaw skills or a truck to do the work yourself. Purchasing a wood splitter makes chopping wood easier!
- Using a chainsaw can be dangerous. If you have never used a saw before, consider taking a course.



If you have questions about this, you may want to consider talking with your neighbours. Most people are happy to offer advice and may even lend a hand 🙋

Other Considerations:

There are many places online to order freeze dried foods and emergency rations, but these tend to be very expensive. You may want to consider investing in a food dehydrator or smoker to prepare your own emergency rations. There are usually Caselot sales in the grocery stores in August and January. This is a good time to buy canned goods as buying by the case saves money.

Stay aware of the weather. If a fair amount of snow is forecast in your area, fill your car with fuel. If your medication is running out or you have specific needs for your family such as diapers, then prepare in advance. With the long wait times at the pharmacies this year, it is essential that you order medication refills in advance. Stack firewood closer to the house, buy or bake some bread or cook a soup or stew you can reheat on your wood or camp stove. Prepare.

You should also prepare to have no power or phone for at least a few days during a big storm. This may mean calling family and letting them know you are settling in for a storm. You might even want to consider staying with family until the storm passes.

Get out your flashlights/candles. Ensure your animals have enough food/water to make it for a few days if you can't get out to feed them. Play cards, read books or build a puzzle while you wait out the blizzard.

Once the storm has passed, have patience. It will take the road and hydro crew time to get the roads cleared and the hydro lines back up.

2022- Fire Season Update

There were 4 forest/structure fires in the area during the summer of 2022. Each of these fires was actioned by POD members and neighbours. The pre-planning, communication plan, and use of the Cheslatta Community Wildfire Response Units helped prevent the fires from spreading and growing larger.

Neighbourhood PODs

One of the most important projects that CERS has undertaken is the establishment of Neighbourhood PODs. POD leaders establish communication networks with their neighbours to help organize and plan for emergencies.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in your neighborhood POD, email cers.information@gmail.com

Up Coming Meetings

Chinook Emergency Response Society Annual General Meeting

- Dec 6th at 6:15 PM at Grassy Plains School
- New members are always welcome

Southside Volunteer Fire Department

- Inspect and clean your chimneys regularly
- Never use a BBQ or propane heater or generator in an enclosed area
- Interested in learning about how you can become part of the team for this critical service? Come to the firehall on Tuesdays at 6:00 – everyone is welcome!

**** ALWAYS CALL 911 IF YOU SEE A FIRE ****

Winter Emergency Preparation Checklist

Prepare Your Yard

- Create snow fences
- Have snow removal equipment ready
- Have a plan for caring for animals (shelter, feed and water)

Prepare Your Home

- Prepare a winter emergency kit for a minimum of 72 hrs (warm clothes, blankets, food, water, candles, cash, portable radios, medication, flashlights etc.)
- Have an alternative heat source

Community

- Reach out to neighbours
 - New to the community?
 - Seniors?
 - Limited transportation?
- Share contact information and plans with neighbours
- Join the Chinook Emergency Response Society

Prepare Your Vehicle

- Use winter tires
- Carry a shovel and a winter emergency kit (warm clothes, blankets, food, heat, candles, matches etc.)
- Keep your gas tank full

- Inspect and clean your chimney
- Keep fire extinguishers up to date and handy
- Keep fire and Carbon monoxide alarms up to date
- Ensure house is well insulated- including caulking and weather stripping

Getting Involved

CERS is always looking for community members to help out with projects.

- Website.
 - <http://chinook-ers.ca/>
- Email
 - CERS.information@gmail.com
- Facebook
 - www.facebook.com/groups/chinook-ers