

November 2021 Our Stories, Redmond Connections

Redmond Mayor Angela Birney

Hello, I'm Redmond Mayor Angela Birney and welcome to another video in my monthly "Our Stories, Redmond Connections" series.

Every day, it seems, we hear about global warming and the effect it's having on the environment. Each of us are experiencing the impacts, especially when it comes to our weather. Forecasting upcoming storms from previous years has become more challenging with our changing climate.

This winter is no exception. Some experts expect it could be cooler and wetter than usual from La Nina. I'd hate to jinx things by even mentioning the word ("*snow*"). However, that's why everyone, including the City, needs to be prepared for whatever winter might bring.

This month, I thought it would be interesting to check in with some of the city staff responsible for preparing for emergencies and keeping our community safe, as well as ask you this timely question, "are you ready for winter weather?"

Hidemi Tsuru -Traffic Operations and Safety, Public Works

I'm here in our Traffic Management Center, where, you guessed it, Public Works monitors traffic in Redmond using 75 remote control cameras located throughout the city.

We utilize these cameras to keep an eye on traffic, check on collisions and other situations when they occur, as well as monitor road conditions when it snows. They're also a great, little-known resource that's available to you to check out road conditions in Redmond before deciding to drive in a big storm.

All of our traffic cameras, along with others scattered around King County, are just a click away on our interactive map located on the city's website. (redmond.gov/Traffic) Check it out!

Triston Osborne -Street Maintenance and Operations, Public Works

As you start to think about winter, the Public Works Street Division has been preparing since summer.

When freezing temperatures are forecast and conditions exist, roads are pre-treated with liquid deicer prior to the morning commute.

We also use new technology that utilizes monitoring sensors around Redmond that provide current road conditions and air temperatures. We also contract with a meteorologist that provides localized weather reports during the winter season.

When snow and ice conditions affect our roadways, we monitor priority routes on a regular basis. Priority routes are broken into two categories.

First, major arterials, emergency routes, and access to highways and freeways. Then, arterial networks between residential areas and key service centers. Lower priority routes may not be addressed until higher priority routes are clear and depend on the severity of the event.

You can find out more about the Snow and Ice program on the City's website. (redmond.gov/SnowIce)

LaNaya Myers -Go Redmond Program, Planning

It's getting darker much earlier now, making it more difficult for you to be seen walking.

To help keep you and your family safe, make sure to wear light and reflective clothing so drivers can see you, cross the street at crosswalks, make eye contact with drivers before stepping out into the street, and when possible use sidewalks or walkways even in parking lots.

And if you're driving, drive without distractions, slow down at night and in bad weather, and remember to always look twice for people before making a turn.

Sharing the responsibility to look out for one another will go a long way in making Redmond a safe and enjoyable place to walk.

Greg Twentey -Traffic Division, Police

Now we don't want to jinx things by talking about winter weather conditions, but being prepared helps keep you and your family safe.

When it comes to driving in winter weather, only go out if it's necessary. If you must drive, make sure your car is free of snow, your windshield is clear and your wipers are working, and check to ensure your tires have proper traction.

Decrease your speed and increase your following distance to allow for lower traction. Obey all traffic laws if stoplights are not working.

Carry cold-weather gear in your car in case you get stuck and keep at least half a tank of fuel in your vehicle.

And with the days getting shorter and darker earlier, it's important to watch out for pedestrians.

Knowing how to handle winter road conditions will help keep you and others safe.

And one more important thing to remember, even during a storm, is to only call 911 in case of an emergency. If you need to report a non-emergency, please call Redmond Police Dispatch instead. (425-556-2500) Thank you

Jill Smith -Communications Manager, Executive

The city's Communications team is ready to keep you informed this winter.

Be sure to follow @CityofRedmond on social media,

Sign up to receive the City's weekly eNewsletter, (redmond.gov/eNews)

And visit the city's website where we'll post alerts on the homepage and you can find a variety of weather-related updates, information, web links, and other resources to keep you informed, prepared, and safe this winter season. (redmond.gov)

Janeen Olson -Emergency Management, Fire

More than 150 people in the U.S. die every year from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning. You can't actually see or smell carbon monoxide if it's emitted from appliances like your gas furnace, portable heaters, or generators when they are not working or vented properly. Breathing in carbon monoxide at high levels can be fatal.

To help protect you and your family, install carbon monoxide alarms outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home. Never bring your hibachi, charcoal grill, or other propane cooking appliances indoors for cooking or heating your home. And make sure to only use your portable generators outdoors in a well-ventilated area away from all doors, windows, and vents.

There're also one more thing to remember to do this time of year, change the batteries in all of your smoke alarms, and those carbon monoxide alarms too, to keep you and your loved ones safe throughout the coming year. (*Learn more about emergency preparedness: redmond.gov/512*)

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A few simple things our family does to prepare for winter weather is we have the PSE app on our phones to report outages, we try to have our devices fully charged when storms are in the forecast, and we remember where we have our lanterns in the house and make sure they have fresh batteries. I also talk with my neighbors who are new to the region to let them know that finding and buying a snow shovel now is easier then when the white stuff is falling from the sky.

Enough about me; I'm interested in hearing your thoughts. In the comments, please share any tips you might have to help everyone get ready for winter weather using the hashtag #RedmondConnections.

And speaking of being prepared, redmond.gov/Weather is your go-to resource for the most up-to-date information during extreme weather and emergencies. You can check out the latest weather alerts, view our emergency road closure map, and learn about flooding or what to do if it, wait for it...("snow").

Thank you for making Redmond a great place to live, work, and play. See you next time!