

SWNI NEIGHBORHOOD REPORTS

January 2024 Ice Storm

Lessons Learned Can Help Neighbors Prepare

Although the ice storm we experienced in January was bad, it could have been far worse!

Had the freezing rain fallen in the quantity it did during the cold snap the day after the event, more ice would have weighed down the trees and power lines, which would have likely brought down more limbs, trees and power lines.

These trees, generally accustomed to winds out of the southwest to northwest, were hit with brisk winds out of the east, knocking them over in heavily saturated soils.

There is not much that we can do about this scenario; however, there is much we can do to prepare for the next event:

1. **Prune your trees** (but not mid-March through mid-June to avoid disturbing our feathered friends during their nesting period).
2. **Never leave home without your cell phone.** It's best to always keep it with you. In the event an energized power line falls on your vehicle, call 911 and then call PGE's emergency line at 800-544-1795.
It's critical to stay within the vehicle until the authorities give you the OK to get out of the vehicle. Doing otherwise would likely lead to electrocution if one were to have hold of metal (such as the door handle) within the vehicle while touching the ground with a body part.
3. **Keep your vehicle winterized.** Carry a shovel, bags of non-clumping cat litter (for traction), and bags of sand or salt to weigh down the back of your vehicle (rear- or all-wheel drive) to give it extra traction in

the ice and snow. It is good to carry a supply of water, snacks, flashlight, reflective warm clothing, and a blanket in case you are delayed or detained in your vehicle for an extended time.

4. **Use good driving techniques.** If you need to drive when the roads are dicey, remember not to stand on the brake pedal if your vehicle begins to slide on the ice. Doing so turns your vehicle into a hockey puck. Keep your foot off the brake and turn your wheel in the direction you want to go. Like hockey pucks, vehicles slide very well on ice and usually hit something before coming to a stop.
5. **Develop good relationships with your neighbors.** First, it's the right thing to do, and who knows, they may need you or you may need them for help, especially during the fall and winter months.
How, one may ask? Perhaps by allowing them to use your compost bins to clean up following a winter storm if you have excess capacity, or you theirs should the situation be reversed.
6. **Keep your gutters free of debris — especially prior to winter storm season.** Clogged gutters could lead to excessive ice buildup within the gutters that could create other problems.
7. **Keep an incandescent or halogen lamp on hummingbird feeders to help keep the nectar from freezing.** This will also provide some warmth for these little guys



during our long, cold winter nights. See photo above.

8. **Be prepared with the tools and equipment to deal with the aftermath of fallen yard debris.** These include rubbish containers, loppers (regular and ratchet), a pruning saw, wheelbarrow, hand truck, various-sized rakes, brooms, and if you need, or merely want, more friends, a chain saw and a utility trailer.
9. **Be prepared with a pair of shoe spikes (e.g., golf shoes), ice cleats or crampons.** This will make walking on icy surfaces safer (though not entirely safe).
10. **In the event of a power outage, do what you can to keep pipes from freezing.** Options include letting your faucets drip or shutting off the water to the home and opening all the faucets so they drain.

— Gene Lynard
Public Safety Chair
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