



## THE WONDERS OF WINTER

As I write this article, the beauty of our winter wonderland surrounds us. Yet, heed these safety reminders to some of the “wonders” of winter.

### **I wonder if I should travel today?**

I am sure every single one of us has ventured out and traveled in weather that we shouldn't have. We were driven by our pull to get to our destination for a meeting, to visit family, or to attend an event.

- Check the weather and view the maps online or on your phone.
- Get the 511 App for your phone for MN road conditions and view the road conditions through the cameras by the Minnesota Department of Transportation.
- Leave early before the driving conditions get nasty.
- Make sure your vehicle is ready for winter driving and carrying a winter emergency kit.
- If the road is icy and you hit a power pole, stay in the vehicle unless it is on fire. The power line may be on your vehicle and it will not be safe to get out UNLESS you know how.
- Decide not to travel. You don't want to be sitting in a ditch or snow bank saying, “I wish I wouldn't have left.”

### **I wonder what that ice might do to my power?**

Too often, when we experience icy roads, we get a similar effect on our power lines. Ice can build up on the lines, and cause damage due to the weight. If you lose power during a winter storm, then take these actions.

- Be careful if you venture outside since poles may be down along with the power lines.
- Stay away from power lines on the ground. They can still be energized and you can't tell by looking at them.
- Call in your power outage to the cooperative. And, check to see if others are impacted by the weather on the outage map on the co-op's webpage.

### **I wonder what hypothermia looks like?**

A person can be experiencing hypothermia right in front of you and you may not recognize the symptoms. It can happen at work and at home, and it can even occur when indoors. Hypothermia can quickly become a medical emergency.

- Watch for the “umbles”. A person will mumble and stumble.
- Look for shivering, although as hypothermia worsens, shivering stops.
- Be aware of their confusion and poor decision-making, lack of concern about one's condition, drowsiness and/or very low energy.
- Check for progressive loss of consciousness, weak pulse and slow, shallow breathing.
- Learn the first aid care for a person with hypothermia; download a first aid app today.

### **I wonder if I should plug my vehicle in tonight?**

It is recommended to plug your vehicle in if it is going to be outside and will be 5°F or colder.

- Use an extension cord rated for outdoors.
- Make sure the extension cord is in good condition - not frayed or damaged.
- If you are going to leave after driving your vehicle within 2 hours, you do not need to plug it in since it takes about 2 hours to cool down.
- Use a timer so you don't waste electricity. Only 2 hours are needed to warm up your vehicle and it should not be plugged in for more than 4 hours, on average.