

Government urges you to use the extra hour this week to get Ready for Winter!



A campaign launched today urges people in Scotland to use the extra hour as the clocks go back this Sunday (27 October 2013) to get ready for winter.

We can't be sure what weather Scotland will enjoy over the winter period, so the campaign reminds people that severe weather can strike at any time, and taking action now will serve them well in winter, and all year round.

While 44 per-cent of people in Scotland say they feel prepared for severe weather according to new research published today, people are being asked to consider how prepared they are for all kinds of challenging conditions through this year's Ready for Winter campaign.

The campaign sets out the simple steps we can all take in the home, before a journey (whether driving, cycling or on foot), at work and in our communities. It also encourages people to look out for others, especially the more vulnerable, when bad weather strikes.

Findings from the survey carried out jointly by the British Red Cross and the Scottish Government show that:

- There's a five per cent increase in public preparedness for extreme weather on last year – 44 per cent in 2013 versus 39 per cent in 2012.

- People are most concerned about extreme weather, power cuts and being cut off from their water supply.
- Many car owners think they're doing enough just by having an ice scraper and de-icer.

In the last four years, parts of Scotland have been badly affected by severe weather – from high winds and blizzards that affected the country last February, to the snow and freezing temperatures of previous winters.

Launching the campaign, Minister for Transport and Veterans, Keith Brown, said:-“While we can't stop the weather causing disruption, we can be well prepared to deal with it. Our winter preparedness campaign reminds us of this and the simple actions we can all take to prepare ourselves. With the clocks changing next week, the campaign calls on everyone to use the extra hour to get ready in the home, before a journey, at our place of work and in our communities. This will serve us well not just throughout the winter months, but all year round and in a range of emergency situations.

“As we have seen in Scotland, severe weather can strike quickly and at any time of year. In March, we saw the impact of severe snowstorms on communities in Arran, Kintyre and Dumfries and Galloway. The weather can cause a range of problems but we can be ready for them. So whether it is making your home energy efficient, protecting your pipes, packing an emergency kit for the car or looking out for vulnerable neighbours, we can all play our part in helping Scotland get ready for winter.

“I'm delighted the campaign is again being run in partnership with the British Red Cross and will be supported by a variety of other partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors in Scotland.”

David Miller, operations director for the British Red Cross,

said:- “At the Red Cross we know that severe weather, including snow and floods, can happen quickly and have serious consequences. However, with a few simple steps you can make yourself and others more able to cope with the disruption it can bring. You can prepare an emergency kit for your home and car, jot down your emergency phone numbers and check on any neighbours, family or friends to see if they will need any help.

“Each year the Red Cross helps people across Scotland cope with the effects of severe weather and this winter we’ll be prepared and ready. We urge everyone to take some time to get ready too.”

COSLA Spokesperson for Education & Young People, Councillor Douglas Chapman, said:- “The past few years have demonstrated how unpredictable our weather can be and the risks of being underprepared for it. Councils have contingency plans in place to minimise the effects of severe weather on services this winter but we encourage individuals to also work together to ensure their communities are prepared.”

Inspector David Carballo, Trunk Road Policing Group, Police Scotland, said:- “Winter safety is not just about severe cold weather. We all know that the Scottish weather can be very unpredictable and drivers can sometimes experience a variety of different driving conditions during a single journey.

“Effective planning plays a huge part in everyone getting safely to their destination and, in support of the Ready for Winter campaign, Police Scotland will be working with road safety groups and organisations to offer free advice to road users.”

Phil Evans, the Met Office’s Director of Government Business, said:- “We are pleased to continue to work with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, SEPA and many more agencies this year. By working together we can ensure the Scottish

public are well informed and able to prepare for any severe weather ahead. Members of the public can stay up-to-date by checking the forecasts and warnings on our website –www.metoffice.gov.uk.”