

# The OEM Quarterly

WINTER, 2011-2012

THE  
COLUMBIA/  
BOONE  
COUNTY  
OFFICE OF  
EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Do You Know the 2  
Winter Weather  
Watches &  
Warnings?

Be Prepared in Your 3  
Home & Vehicle

Keep Updated on 4  
the Latest Road  
Conditions/  
Important Numbers  
to Know

OEM Director 5  
Meets Sister City  
Delegation

## A Note From the Director



Director Zim Schwartze

With memories of the blizzard of February 2011 still embedded in our minds, it's time to get ready for another winter season in Columbia and Boone County. The record-setting snowfall of last winter had a tremendous impact on the area and

serves as a reminder of how important it is to prepare. Winter brings with it a variety of hazards. Whether it be freezing rain, sleet, ice or snow, **it's important to be ready**, not just at home, but on the road.

Hundreds of people die each winter because they are not prepared. Whether it's knowing how to drive in less-than-ideal conditions, or knowing what to do if you become stranded on the road or at home, taking time to prepare could mean the difference between life and death.

Much of this newsletter will focus on being ready for all that winter weather can bring. As always, it is our hope that this information will help you, your family, or your business be better prepared.

If you have questions about winter weather preparedness, please call our office at (573) 874-7400, email us at [em@gocolumbiamo.com](mailto:em@gocolumbiamo.com), or check out the Winter Weather section of our website, [www.gocolumbiamo.com/EM](http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/EM). We're also on Facebook now. Just go to [facebook.com](http://facebook.com), and search "Public Safety Joint Communications."

## A Record Winter

The National Weather Service says Columbia set a record for a meteorological winter, which is the three-month period from December, 2010 through February, 2011. According to NWS figures, 43 inches of snow fell during that time period.



The old record was over 36 inches of snow, set in 1905. The 43 inches of snow was the heaviest to fall during the meteorological winter since 1993, when 29 inches was recorded.



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## Winter Weather Watches & Warnings

**K**nowing the differences between watches and warnings can help you prepare for winter weather. Here are the various advisories issued by the National Weather Service (NWS):

**Advisories:** These are issued for lesser events that while presenting an inconvenience, do not pose an immediate threat of death, injury, or significant property damage.

**Winter Weather Advisory:** Issued for average snowfall of 3 to 5 inches, sleet accumulation of less than 1/2 inch, or a combination of winter precipitation which will produce hazardous conditions. At forecaster discretion, an advisory can be issued for lesser amounts of snowfall if the timing of the event creates hazardous conditions.

**Freezing Rain Advisory:** Light freezing rain which produces ice accumulations less than 1/4 inch.

**Wind Chill Advisory:** Wind chill values of minus 15 to minus 24 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Winter Storm Watch:** A watch is used when the risk of hazardous winter weather has increased significantly, there is a strong possibility it will reach warning criteria, and falls in the 12 to 48 hour portion of the forecast.

**Warnings:** Warnings are issued when an event is occurring, is imminent, or has a high probability of occurrence. Warnings are issued for events that can be life threatening. The following warnings can be issued:

**Blizzard Warning:** Sustained wind or frequent gusts greater than or equal to 35 mph accompanied by falling and/or blowing snow, frequently reducing visibility to less than 1/4 mile for three hours or more.

**Ice Storm Warning:** Ice accumulation of 1/4 inch or more.

**Winter Storm Warning:** Issued for snow events of 6 inches or more, sleet accumulations of 1/2 inch or more, or a combination of winter precipitation which will create life threatening conditions.

**Wind Chill Warning:** Wind chill temperature of minus 25 degrees or colder.



# Be Prepared in Your Home and Vehicle!!

With winter upon us, now is the time to make sure you're prepared for all that winter brings with it. The Office of Emergency Management advises everyone to be prepared by knowing what to do at home and on the road when winter weather strikes.

## In Your Home:

**Stay updated.** Keep ahead of advancing winter weather by listening to a NOAA Weather Radio.

**Check batteries.** Check battery powered equipment before the storm arrives, in case electric service is interrupted.

**Check your food and stock an extra supply.** Include food that requires no cooking in case of power failure. Make sure you have a supply of the proper food and medicine. Make sure pets and animals have shelter and a water supply.

**Be careful when using fireplace, stoves, or space heaters.** Proper ventilation is essential to avoid a deadly build-up of carbon monoxide. Don't use charcoal inside as it gives off large amounts of carbon monoxide. Keep flammable material away from space heaters and do not overload electric circuits.

**Dress for the conditions when outdoors.** Wear several layers of light-weight, warm clothing. Outer garments should be tightly woven, waterproof and hooded. For the hands, mittens that are tight at the wrists offer better protection than fingered gloves.

**Be careful when shoveling snow.** It is extremely hard work for anyone in less than prime physical condition. It can bring on a heart attack, a major cause of death during and after winter storms.

**DON'T FORGET YOUR PETS.** Make sure outdoor animals have a warm shelter, along with plenty of food and water.



## In Your Vehicle:

**Get your car winterized before winter arrives.** The following items should be checked: ignition system, cooling system, fuel system, battery, lights, tires, heater, brakes, wipers, defroster, oil, exhaust. Keep water out of your fuel tank by keeping it full.



**Carry a winter storm kit.** It should include: flashlight, windshield scraper, paper towels, extra clothes, matches/candles, booster cables, compass, maps, sand, chains, blankets, high calorie non-perishable food.

**Winter travel by car is serious business.** If the storm exceeds or tests your driving ability, seek available shelter immediately.

**Plan your travel.** Try not to travel alone and drive in convoy when possible.

**Drive carefully and defensively.** Pump your breaks when trying to stop on snow or ice covered roads.

# Know the Winter Road Conditions



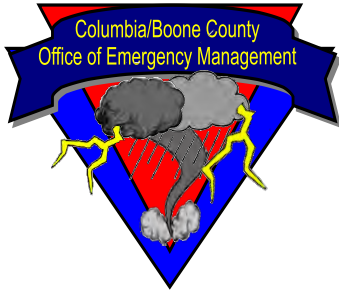
When snow and ice fall in Columbia and Boone County, it's important to know the conditions of roads on which you will be traveling. For information on the condition of city streets, county roads and highways in mid-Missouri and all over the state, visit our site at [www.gocolumbiamo.com/PSJC/Services/usaroads.php](http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/PSJC/Services/usaroads.php)



## Remember Who to Call

Winter weather can trigger a variety of emergency situations, from traffic crashes to power outages. Here are the numbers to call in various non-emergency winter situations.

<u>Department</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Columbia Police Department	573-874-7652	Non-injury traffic accidents, report request, speak to specific officer, etc.
Boone County Sheriff's Dept.	573-875-1111	Report request, speak to specific deputy, etc.
Columbia Fire Department	573-874-7391	Fire Administration ( <b>M-F from 8am-5pm</b> )
	573-874-7450	Fire non-emergency after hours/weekends
Columbia Public Works	573-874-6289	Inquiries about snow and ice-covered roads, traffic lights out, street signs missing/knocked over (unless it is a STOP sign or other sign that is causing a potential hazard) ( <b>M-F from 8am-5pm</b> )
	573-445-9426	After-hours emergency number for Public Works calls
Boone Co. Public Works	573-449-8515	Road graded, brush cut, road maintenance, etc. ( <b>M-F from 7:00am-4:30pm</b> )
Water & Light	573-875-2555	Electrical outages or streetlight outages
Public Safety Joint Communications	573-442-6131	Non-emergency dispatch for fire, police, or emergency medical services
Boone Electric Cooperative	573-441-7227	Power outages
Ameren/UE	1-800-552-7583	Power outages



**Columbia/Boone County  
Office of Emergency Management  
Public Safety Joint Communications**

17 North 7th Street, Suite A  
Columbia, MO 65201  
(573) 874-7400



## OEM/PSJC Director Meets Laoshan Delegation



Zim accepts a token of friendship from Mr. Zhang Yongbo, Vice-Director of the Political Consultative Conference in the Laoshan District.

OEM/PSJC Director Zim Schwartz was among a group of Columbia City officials who met with a visiting delegation from Columbia's sister city in October. The group from the Laoshan District, Qingdao, Shandong Province, China came to Columbia as part of an effort to share ideas on government operations, business and education, and enjoy social and cultural exchanges.

The Laoshan District and Columbia have been sister cities since 2006.



The Shandong Province, China



Zim gives the "thumbs up" to Mr. Yongbo and Ms. Qiu Shuoyan, from the Commercial Bureau of Laoshan District, translator.