



STRONACH TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Public Safety Advisory | Fred R. LaPoint, Fire Chief | October 2026

Get Ready for Winter Now

Winter is close. This year it arrives with fuel markets unsettled by the war in the Middle East and with the sign-up for Manistee County's CodeRED alerts out of service. Neither is cause for alarm. Both are reasons to do the same preparation that gets us through any ice storm, and to do it now, before the cold arrives.

IF PAYING FOR HEAT WILL BE HARD, ASK NOW. Don't wait for an empty tank or a shutoff notice. For income-eligible households, Michigan's State Emergency Relief can help with propane or fuel oil once the tank is at 25 percent or less, and with past-due heating and electric bills. Apply at michigan.gov/mibridges, or call 2-1-1 to learn what you qualify for. FiveCAP, Manistee County's community action agency, is at (231) 723-8327.

Line up your heating fuel

This winter's forecast is mixed. The U.S. Energy Information Administration expects homes that heat with fuel oil to spend about 21 percent more than last winter and homes with electric heat about 4 percent more, while propane and natural gas bills are forecast to run lower.

- **Fill propane or fuel oil tanks this fall either way.** A forecast is not a delivery. A January cold snap stretches every dealer's schedule at once. Ask about automatic delivery or a budget plan.

Heat safely: this is where winter fires start

- **Space heaters:** three feet from anything that can burn, plugged directly into a wall outlet (never an extension cord or power strip), and off when you leave the room or go to bed.
- **Never heat your home with an oven, stove, grill, or camp heater.** They produce carbon monoxide.
- **Generators run outdoors only,** at least 20 feet from the house with the exhaust pointed away. Never in a garage, even with the door open.
- **Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.** The clocks change Sunday, November 1, an easy day to remember. If a CO alarm sounds, get everyone out first, then call 911.

Plan for a long outage

- **On a private well? No power means no water.** Store at least one gallon per person per day, and fill extra containers before a storm.
- **Keep a week of food that needs no cooking,** a manual can opener, flashlights, spare batteries, and a battery or hand-crank radio.
- **Refill prescriptions as early as your insurance allows.** If you rely on oxygen or other powered medical equipment, have a backup plan that doesn't depend on the grid.
- **Keep some cash at home and your vehicle's tank at least half full.** Card readers and gas pumps need power too.

Stay informed and look out for each other

- **Stronach Township has no warning siren, and the county's CodeRED sign-up link is not working.** Turn on emergency alerts in your phone's settings and keep a NOAA Weather Radio set to county code 026101. Details: stronachfiredept.com/alerts-notice.
- **For outage questions, call Central Dispatch's non-emergency line, 231-723-6241,** so 911 stays open for emergencies.
- **Check on older neighbors and anyone who lives alone,** and before you share news in a crisis, confirm it came from an official source.

Preparation isn't fear. It's what turns an emergency back into an inconvenience.

Sources: Michigan Dept. of Health and Human Services, State Emergency Relief Manual ERM 301 (Oct. 1, 2026); Michigan 2-1-1; FiveCAP, Inc.; U.S. Energy Information Administration winter outlook (Oct. 7, 2026); U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission; U.S. Fire Administration; Ready.gov; Manistee County; National Weather Service.