

Winter is approaching! We all hope and pray that we don't have a severe winter storm this year like we did last winter. Some called it "Snowmageddon", my wife called it "Snovid 21". Anyway, I'll spend a few minutes sharing some experiences had by some in Hideaway last year and my recommendations for preparing for a similar event this coming winter.

What happened last winter: The severity of the winter storm caught ERCOT (the Energy Reliability Council of Texas) unprepared and as a result many Texas residents experienced power outages lasting several days. The power was off at our house for 4 days! We have a propane tank and gas logs and invited a couple of our neighbors to come over to our house to try to stay warm. After several hours, we decided that we would need to seek shelter elsewhere. I drove our neighbors to friends' homes that still had power, then Donna & I went to a friend's house that still had power. After being at this friend's house about an hour, their power went off. We spent the night and the next morning we moved to another friend's house. This friend never lost their power and we stayed there until we got the word that Oncor was turning the power back on in our neighborhood. When we got home, we found no major problems and I checked on both our neighbor's houses. One was ok, but the other had a major water leak in the ceiling of their master bath. I turned their water off at the meter and called them to let them know what had happened. As insurance adjusters and contractors were very busy, it was several months before they could move back into their home!

What should you do to prepare this winter if we should encounter another severe winter storm and you lose power to your house? –

- If you have plumbing pipes in your attic, insulate them
- Locate your water shutoff valve (probably near your water meter).
- Leave some water faucets dripping
- Fully charge your cellphone.
- Buy some batteries for your flashlight.
- Stock up on some snacks that don't require cooking
- Get your propane tank filled (if you have propane)