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SITUATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

SUPPORT AND RESOURCE GUIDE

2.16.2021

Members of the public should continue to monitor local news outlets for weather updates and follow guidance from local officials.
For general information, contact 211 or visit https://www.211texas.org/

For local emergency resources, contact your local Office of Emergency Management.
The Office of the Texas Governor can be found here:
https://gov.texas.gov/

For comprehensive emergency preparedness and response information, visit https://tdem.texas.gov/

ALL EMERGENCIES AND LIFE-THREATENING SITUATIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO 911.

Travel and Road Information

For information on road closures, please visit drivetexas.org or by phone at (800) 452-9292. Travel planning and other tips are available in the TxDOT Safety Guide for Winter Travel.

For Emergencies
Call 911

For Roadside Assistance
Call (800) 525-5555

For Current Road Information
Call (800) 452-9292

Weather Websites

National Weather Service

Winter Safety

Austin/San Antonio - https://www.weather.gov/ewx/

Fort Worth/Dallas - https://www.weather.gov/fwd/

Corpus Christi Weather - https://www.weather.gov/crp/

Houston Weather - https://www.weather.gov/hgx/

Brownsville Weather - https://www.weather.gov/bro/

Lake Charles, LA (Southeast Texas) Weather - https://www.weather.gov/lch/

U.S Geological Survey app to let users locate stream gauges and water conditions near them - https://txpub.usgs.gov/water-onthego/

NOAA - Watches, Warnings or Advisories for Texas - https://alerts.weather.gov/cap/tx.php?x=1

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) - https://www.noaa.gov/

During the winter season, residents can contact **2-1-1 Texas**, the state's free 24-hour helpline, to check on possible community-established warming centers or related services in their area. No matter where you live in Texas, you can **dial 2-1-1** or **877-541-7905** or visit **https://www.211texas.org/** for community resources.

Top 211 services request in your area? Visit 211 Counts - https://tx.211counts.org/

Does Your Organization Offer A Health Or Human Service To The Public? (e.g. Warming center/Shelter? Feeding? Health? Housing? Mental Health?) It's important to add/edit/update your listing!

Visit https://www.211texas.org/add-or-edit-your-2-1-1-listing/

POWER OUTAGE INFORMATION:

Texas Power Outages - https://poweroutage.us/area/state/texas

Public Utility Commission - Outage Map of Texas https://www.puc.texas.gov/storm/

ERCOT Grid Information - http://www.ercot.com/gridinfo

Weather Storm Preparedness

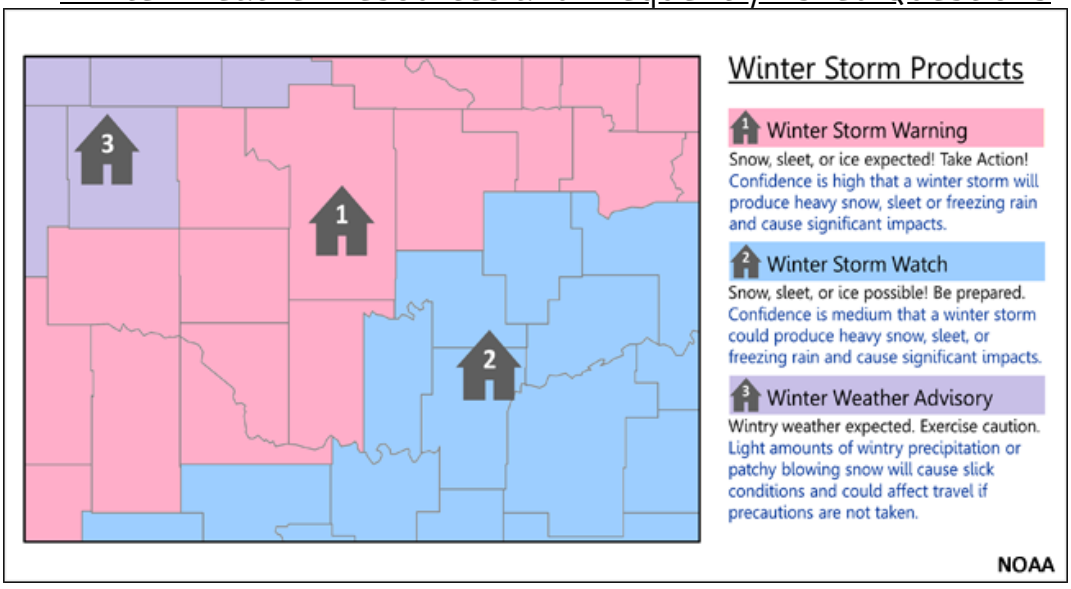
Prepare now for winter storms:

- Preparing for the Unexpected: Winter Storms
- Disaster Recovery Guide & eBook – Includes using portable generators safely
- Preparing for Winter Storms Fact Sheet
- Don't Get Caught Out in the Cold: Winter Weather Awareness and Safety Tips
- Winter Storms: Preventing and Thawing Frozen Pipes
- Winter Storms: Safety Tips for Heating Your Home
- Simple Disaster Supplies Kit & List
- Emergency Food & Water Supplies List
- Can these Trees be Saved?

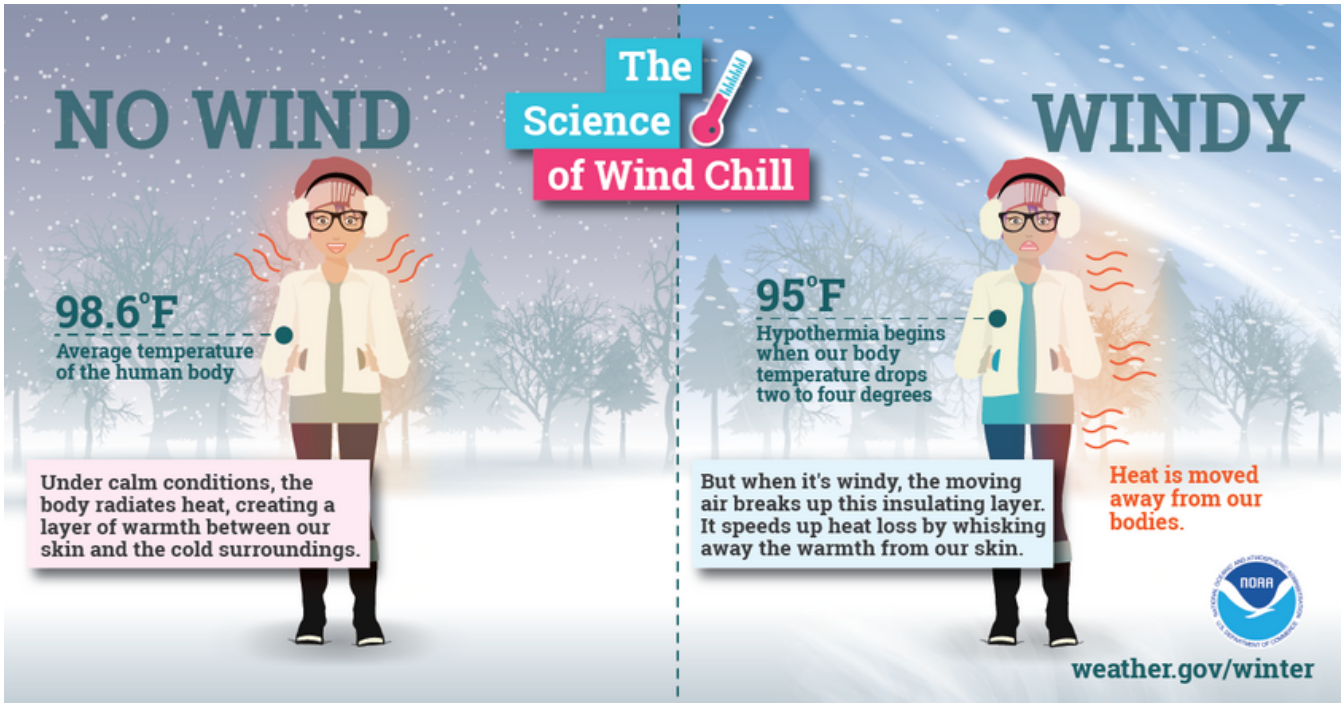
Additional Resources

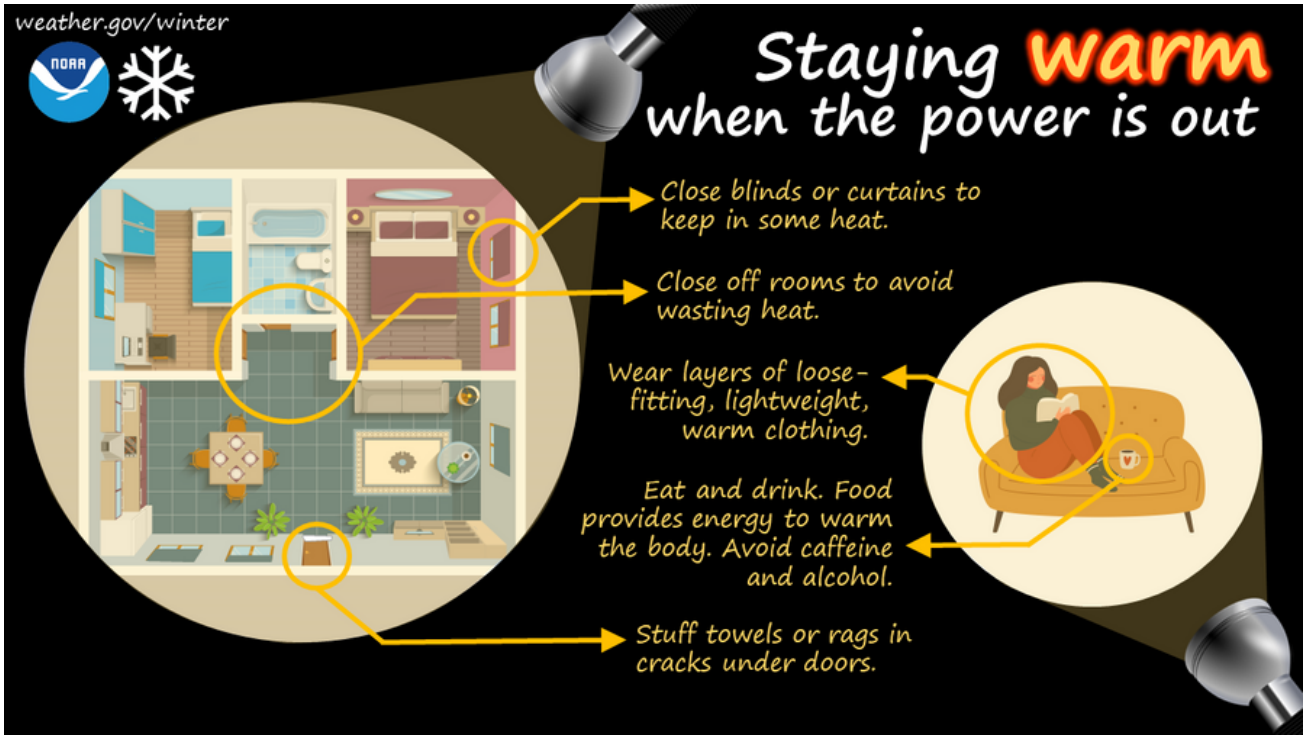
- Snowstorms and Extreme Cold
- Winter Storm Resource Center
- iPhone & Android App: Winter Survival Kit
- Driving in Snow and Ice
- Portable Generator Safety Video

Winter Weather Resources and Frequently Asked Questions



Full list of Winter Infographics from NOAA





Salvation Army Texas

Location Search

Feeding Texas - Locate a local food bank

American Red Cross - Winter Storm Preparedness

Find an open shelter

Preventing & Thawing Frozen Pipes

How to Choose a Generator

Power Outage Safety

Power Outage Checklist - English

Power Outage Checklist - Spanish

Why Pipe Freezing is a Problem

Water has a unique property in that it expands as it freezes. This expansion puts tremendous pressure on whatever is containing it, including metal or plastic pipes. No matter the strength of a container, expanding water can cause pipes to break.

Pipes that freeze most frequently are:

- Pipes that are exposed to severe cold, like outdoor hose bibs, swimming pool supply lines, and water sprinkler lines.
- Water supply pipes in unheated interior areas like basements and crawl spaces, attics, garages, or kitchen cabinets.
- Pipes that run against exterior walls that have little or no insulation.

How to Prevent Frozen Pipes

- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals up out of the reach of children.
- When the weather is very cold outside, let the cold water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe - even at a trickle - helps prevent pipes from freezing.
- Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night. By temporarily suspending the use of lower nighttime temperatures, you may incur a higher heating bill, but you can prevent a much more costly repair job if pipes freeze and burst.
- If you will be going away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55° F.

How to Thaw Frozen Pipes

- If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, suspect a frozen pipe. Likely places for frozen pipes include against exterior walls or where your water service enters your home through the foundation.
- Keep the faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt, water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through the pipe will help melt ice in the pipe.
- Apply heat to the section of pipe using an electric heating pad wrapped around the pipe, an electric hair dryer, a portable space heater (kept away from flammable materials), or by wrapping pipes with towels soaked in hot water. Do not use a blowtorch, kerosene or propane heater, charcoal stove, or other open flame device.

- Apply heat until full water pressure is restored. If you are unable to locate the frozen area, if the frozen area is not accessible, or if you can not thaw the pipe, call a licensed plumber.
- Check all other faucets in your home to find out if you have additional

Are your pipes frozen? Here is what you need to do right now

Updated: February 16, 2021, 3:43 pm | Click2Houston.com

If water is not coming out of the faucet right now, there is a good chance your pipes may be frozen. But that doesn't necessarily mean your pipes are busted, cracked, or broken. There are a few steps you can take right now to help prevent damage over the next few days.

If you haven't already, shut off the water to your home immediately.
Do not attempt to thaw pipes without turning off the main shut-off valve. This way, if you do have a pipe burst, the damage would be limited since there will not be water to feed the leak.

If you can, fill up the bathtub with water before you shut it off.
(You may not have water flowing to do this.) Even if the water to your home is shut off you can still flush the toilet if you have water to add to the tank at the top.

Turn on the bathtub faucet or mainline into the house.
This way, when the pipes do start to thaw, there is an opening for water to drain through without building up pressure in the pipes. The pressure in the pipes could cause breaks.
"If your pipes are underground, it's less likely the pipe is broken. It could be a pipe that is frozen in the attic, for example, pipes that go to the water heater," said Jordan.

Should you try to thaw out pipes on your own?

There are conflicting reports if trying to thaw out your pipes is a good idea. You may hear about people using blow dryers or heating pads to thaw out frozen pipes. Jordan says to prevent damage to the pipes they are NOT recommending people try to thaw out their own pipes.

Your pipes are more likely to come out of this unbroken or cracked if you let them thaw out on their own when the weather warms up.

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The process of thawing can be when the biggest problems appear

"When it starts getting warmer, that's when we will start seeing more problems because the pipes are thawing," said Jordan. "When the pipe thaws the pressure caused by the water begins to rush through the pipe and could cause the pipe to break."

The pressure from unfrozen water between the ice and closed faucet is the main cause of ruptures in frozen pipes. (This is also why having the main water shut off is a good idea.)

How do I know if I should call a plumber for help?

Of course, if you have any visible signs of damage to pipes, call a plumber. You should also call if you see water ponding outside or even from the ceiling or walls. You might have to wait! Jordan says they are very busy right now and that all plumbers will be. He advises people to get on a list now for a plumber to come out and help asap.

File for insurance help ASAP

The Texas Department of Insurance says most homeowner policies cover sudden and accidental water damage. This is damage caused by things like a burst pipe, tub or toilet overflow, or a broken appliance hose. Most policies also cover damage if water gets into your house through a storm-damaged roof or window.

Coverage varies by policy, so read your policy or talk to your agent to know what's covered. If your policy doesn't cover water damage, you might be able to add the coverage to your policy.

Tips on cleaning up after a pipe burst.

Water-damage coverage and claims

Texas Department of Insurance

If you have a water leak or flooding

Follow these tips to prevent more damage after a water leak or flood:

- **Stop the water flow or leak as soon as you can.** Know how to turn the water off at the main valve or at the valves under your sinks and near appliances.
- **Remove pools of water and start drying the area to prevent more damage and mold growth**. Dry the area as soon as you can. Mold can start growing within a day after a leak.
- **Move wet items to a dry room or an area with fresh air.** If you move items outside, put them somewhere secure to protect them from theft.
- **Pull up wet carpets and rugs.**
- **If you can't remove the water and dry the area yourself, use a service.** Search the internet or check a phone book for businesses that specialize in cleaning up after water damage. Your agent also can help you find a service.

How do I file a homeowners insurance claim?

Homeowner's Insurance Guide

How to avoid contracting scams

4 Steps to Take When a Pipe Bursts

1. Stop the water

First thing, turn off the water flow when you suspect a pipe has broken, even if you don't know where the water's coming from. You'll find the stop tap on the water main. It is typically located under the kitchen sink or where the main service pipe connects to your house. Every family member should know the location of the water shut-off stopcock for emergencies.

Once the main water switch is off, you'll need to drain the pipes. To do this, run the cold water on all the faucets. Be sure to flush each toilet at least once. Shut off the hot water heater. Once the hot water system is off, go back to each faucet and run the hot water to drain that supply. When there is no more running tap water, the leak will stop.

2. Locate the broken pipe and inspect the damage

After draining all the excess water, locate the burst pipe. Inspect the damage and consider where the pipe is located before you run off to the home improvement store. Regardless of the damage or size of the break, a major water pipe will take more time and effort to replace because it holds more water and leads to additional connections, as opposed to a single pipe under the bathroom sink.

If it's a small break, you might be able to patch it and prevent further damage while saving money. If you use a commercial tape or chemical bonding agent, however, keep an eye on that repair job, because it might burst later and you'll back where you started.

3. Repair the burst pipe

Fixing a rupture or crack in non-main pipes is usually fairly straightforward, but it can become expensive depending on the mending material you choose. Here is an inexpensive repair for small cracks and water breaks that also gives you superior hold.

You'll need an extra-long length of ordinary garden hose and two or three hose clamps or similar grips that produce extreme constriction. Measure the fissure or crack and cut the garden hose about ten inches longer than needed to fill the broken area.

Next, slice the garden hose so you can slip it over the crack or burst in the water pipe. Using the hose clamps or similar brackets, hold the hose portion over the busted area and compress it as tight as it will go. Test your repair by turning on the water.

If the break is larger, use a hacksaw to cut away the portion of the pipe that's busted. Be sure to cut it about an inch larger on either side of the rupture. When replacing the missing piece of pipe, use pipe spacers and sealant, but do not tighten it too tight. When a compression nut is too tight it causes an ovaling effect that leads to further leaking. If you tightened the compression nut too much and the repair ovals, start with another compression nut.

9 Things You Should Do When You Find a Burst Pipe

A burst pipe is the last thing anyone wants to tackle. But there are some quick temporary fixes you can do to slow the impact of a burst pipe.

1. **Shut off the Water**

When water freezes, it expands in volume by about 9 percent. And it expands with tremendous force: The pressure inside pipes may go from 40 pounds per square inch to 40,000 psi! No pipe can hold that much pressure, so it breaks open. The break may occur where the ice forms, but more often, it occurs where water pressure finds a weak spot in the pipe. That may be inches or even feet from the frozen area. You might also need to shut off the electricity as well, depending on where the leaks occurs and how big it is. Find out where your water shutoff valve is located.

2. Open a Faucet

Opening a faucet after you shut off the water main will relieve any remaining water pressure in the pipes.

3. Call a Plumber

Unless you feel comfortable trying to repair a broken pipe on your own, you're probably going to need a plumber at some point. You can, however, do several things before calling the plumber that will help reduce the impact of a broken pipe.

4. Start Getting Rid of the Water

Grab the mop, buckets and a shop vacuum to start to get rid of the water because you certainly don't want it soaking into everything else in the house. Plus, a quick clean up will reduce the chances of something getting moldy. Find out how to prevent pipes from freezing so you don't have to worry about a burst pipe.

5. Turn Up the heat

Set up fans to blow heat into cold rooms. Keep the garage door closed. If you have reduced water flow, heat the most vulnerable pipes (usually in basements and crawl spaces or near exterior walls) with a hair dryer. Leave the faucet on while you apply heat. As you melt ice, the flow will increase. Figure out how to insulate walls to help keep pipes from freezing.

6. **Open Doors**

If you have exposed pipes inside closets or pantries, leave doors open. Open vanity or cabinet doors so warm air can reach the pipes under sinks as well. Learn how to insulate a garage to reduce heat loss.

7. Place a Piece of Rubber over the Leak

Putting a piece of rubber over the leak should be done in conjunction with placing some kind of clamp over the broken pipe. Insulating before winter can help prevent the problem.

8. Add a Block of Wood Before Adding a Clamp

If you're in a pinch and don't have the necessary tools around to stop the leak, you can improvise by adding a block of wood over the piece of rubber before fastening a clamp. The block of wood will spread the pressure and help prevent the pipe from collapsing.

9. Grab a C-Clamp

Add a C-clamp over the block of wood and piece of rubber to seal the leak for a temporary fix.

How to Get Rid of Mildew and Mold

Electricity off? Here are 8 ways to stay warm if your power is out

If you're realizing the power is out and you want to do all you can to stay warm, here are some ways you could use to avoid the cold.

1. Layers, layers, layers

Don't just put a coat on. Put on a tank, a long sleeve shirt, sweater, and then another sweater and then your coat. This is about staying warm, not fashion or looking svelte. Just put the layers on and wear a hat over your ears. Toasty yet? If not, grab some mittens or gloves or improvise with socks over your hands. And, speaking of socks, wear a couple pairs on your feet and then house slippers if you're indoors. Stay indoors. This is not the time to be opening your house up and letting the cold inside.

2. Block those cracks and crevices.

Feel cold air coming in somewhere? Use thick towels to keep out the drafts, especially under doors and around windows. Use tape to keep the material in place. It may be unsightly for a time, but we're looking for warmth right now, no?

3. Open blinds in the daylight hours, close them at night to keep out drafts

In addition to blocking drafts with towels, use your blinds and window coverings to your benefit. Open them during the day to let daylight warm your space as much as possible and at night, close them to keep drafts out and warm air inside.

4. Use a warming center

Several warming shelters are now open in and around the State to help if you don't have power as the winter weather continues. Food, shelter, blankets and beds are available at several locations. https://www.211texas.org/

5. Blankets

In addition to all of those layers on your body, cuddle in with multiple thick blankets. It's important to keep your pets warm as well with blankets and coats, too. One of our KPRC 2 producers said she and her family are keeping the pets warm and themselves by cuddling with the dogs. "The dogs (act) as space heaters because they put out a ton of heat," she said.

6. Fire pits and grills

Do you have a fire pit or grill? In addition to cooking up some marshmallows and hotdogs today, you can keep yourself warm if you do go outside for a time. Never use a fire pit or grill indoors.

7. Get in your car (But NOT in your garage)

If you're cold and nothing seems to work inside your home, get in your car and idle it in your driveway. A really important point: Make sure to idle your vehicle outside in the open air and not in your garage. The danger is your vehicle's exhaust pipe could pump carbon monoxide – a highly toxic gas – inside your vehicle if idling in the garage. This can be fatal. Do not do this.

8. Fireplaces

Natural gas fireplaces and wood fireplaces are a good option for keeping a few of your main rooms warm without power. Blowers aren't an option without a generator, but a properly maintained fireplace can usually safely keep at least one main room and possibly an adjacent one toasty. Use blankets to cordon off rooms if necessary. Be sure to make sure your flue is open so gas and smoke can escape from your home through your home's chimney.

Media and Press Releases

Governor Abbott Declares ERCOT Reform An Emergency Item
February 16, 2021 | Austin, Texas | Press Release

Here Are Some Tips on How to Stay Warm When the Power is Out
February 16, 2021 | NBC DFW

How long do rolling blackouts last? Why is the power still out? ERCOT update
Updated: 11:22 A6M CST February 15, 2021 | KHOU11

Are your pipes frozen? Here is what you need to do right now
Updated: February 16, 2021, 3:43 pm | Click2Houston.com

Some Texans taking dangerous measures to stay warm during ongoing power outages
Feb, 16, 2021 | KXAN

https://twitter.com/ERCOT_ISO ERCOT Twitter updates

Hidalgo reminds people of the dangers of carbon monoxide
Updated: Feb 16, 2021 / click2houston.com

Rotating outages possible in Lubbock as power grid serving area elevates emergency alert
Feb. 15, 2021 | Lubbock Avalanche -Journal