



Contact: Trenise Lyons (850) 385-7233 ext. 112 Trenise@flash.org

For Immediate Release December 4, 2012

Ensure a Safe and Happy Holiday by Including Winter Weather Preparedness in Your Plans

FLASH provides tips on winter weather preparation to ensure safe and comfortable visits with holiday guests and trips to family holiday travel destinations

TALLAHASSEE, **FL** – The Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH)[®] reminds families that, as they ready for seasonal guests and travel, now is the time to make winter weather preparedness a part of your holiday plans. FLASH is offering useful tips for preventing frozen pipes, ice dams, chimney fires and more to keep families and their guests safe and comfortable throughout the holidays and the winter season.

"While we're all preparing for visitors or planning trips to see friends and loved ones, we can make getting ready for winter weather a part of the preparations," said Leslie Chapman-Henderson, President and CEO of FLASH, the country's leading consumer advocate for strengthening homes and safeguarding families from natural and manmade disasters. "Thoughtful touches like holiday hand towels will be appreciated as long as the water is flowing because you have prevented your pipes from freezing."

According to FLASH, damage from winter-related home hazards like frozen pipes, a leading cause of homeowners' insurance claims, can cost thousands of dollars of damage and become a major inconvenience to you and your quests. Tips to prepare the home include:

- Double check or install proper attic insulation to prevent water damage from ice dams
- Ensure safe usage of fireplaces, furnaces and space heaters
- Insulate pipes to prevent costly floods from frozen pipes
- Keep walkways around your home clear of snow and ice
- Winterize your windows and install window insulation kits to keep your guests warm and toasty
- Prepare to stay safe and warm during power outages

Additionally, it's important to prepare well for holiday travel, which can be treacherous in severe winter weather. Of the 17 deaths reported last year related to severe winter weather, 15 occurred in the exposed elements or in a car. "It's smart to prepare in case you are

marooned by having a well-stocked winter storm survival kit in your car," said Chapman-Henderson. She suggests the following tips when making travel plans:

- Make sure other people know your travel plans and how to contact you. Travel in convoy with other vehicles if possible.
- Prepare an extreme winter weather survival kit for your car. They also make great gifts for loved ones who travel frequently during the holidays. Include:
 - o Non-perishable food such as canned goods or candy bars
 - Extra clothes and blankets
 - o A battery powered radio
 - A shovel
 - Sand
- If stranded, remain in the vehicle. Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna so rescuers can find you. Run the engine occasionally for heat making sure to keep the exhaust pipe clear. Open windows occasionally for fresh air.

You can find more tips and other winter preparedness activities at the <u>Great Winter Weather Party</u>, a fun, family-friendly website and social media campaign aimed at better preparing families and their homes for winter weather hazards. "Like" the *Great Winter Weather Party* on Facebook (<u>facebook.com/wxparty</u>) and "follow us" on Twitter (<u>@wxparty</u>) for tips, activities, games and great prizes throughout the season.

The *Great Winter Weather Party* is presented by FLASH and sponsored by State Farm® (www.facebook.com/statefarm) and Kohler Generators (www.facebook.com/kohlergenerators).

About FLASH

Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH)®, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, is the country's leading consumer advocate for strengthening homes and safeguarding families from natural and manmade disasters. FLASH collaborates with more than 100 innovative and diverse partners that share its vision of making America a more disaster-resistant nation including: BASF, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Florida Division of Emergency Management, The Home Depot®, International Code Council, Kohler® Generators, National Weather Service, RenaissanceRe, Simpson Strong-Tie®, State Farm®, USAA® and WeatherPredict Consulting Inc. In 2008, FLASH opened the interactive weather experience StormStruck: A Tale of Two Homes® in Lake Buena Vista, FL. Learn more about FLASH and gain access to its free consumer resources by visiting www.flash.org or calling (877) 221-SAFE (7233). Also, get timely safety tips to ensure that you and your family are always well protected from natural and manmade disasters by subscribing to the FLASH blog – <u>Protect Your Home in a FLASH</u>.

About Kohler

Kohler Power Systems is a division of Kohler Co., and provides complete power systems, including generators (residential, industrial, mobile and marine), automatic transfer switches, switchgear, monitoring controls, and accessories for emergency, prime power and energy-management applications. Kohler Power Systems has delivered energy solutions for markets worldwide since 1920. Visit www.kohlersmartpower.com.

About State Farm®

State Farm insures more cars and homes than any other insurer in the U.S., is the leading insurer of watercraft and is also a leading insurer in Canada. State Farm's 17,700 agents and more than 67,000 employees serve 81 million policies and accounts – almost 79 million auto, fire, life and health policies in the United States and Canada, and nearly 2 million bank accounts. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company is the parent of the State Farm family of companies. State Farm is ranked No. 31 on the Fortune 500 list of largest companies. For more information, please visit statefarm.com® or in Canada, statefarm.ca®.

#