

## Heavy Snow

# Learn about heavy snow

Snow damage is not always limited to areas known for heavy snowfall. When areas not accustomed to harsh winter conditions are suddenly hit by heavy snowfall, it can quickly become a life-or-death situation.

01

## Past heavy snowfall in Kofu City

During February 14 to 15, 2014, continued heavy snowfall resulted in a record snowfall of 114 cm in Kofu City - the largest in the city's history since 1894. As a result, Yamanashi Prefecture was cut off from key transportation networks and became isolated from the rest of Japan. Until then, the maximum snowfall in Kofu City was 49 cm in January 1998. The snowfall of 114 cm, far exceeding the previous record, had a major impact on people's lives.

This heavy snowfall highlights the challenges of record-breaking winter conditions in areas where snowfall is usually low and rarely accumulates. Let's learn from the events of the 2014 heavy snowfall and get prepared!



February 2014  
Kofu City recorded 114 cm of snow,  
the largest snowfall on record.  
Photo courtesy of NPO Disaster and Disaster  
Prevention Volunteers Miraikai

## Potential damage due to snow

### Casualties

Falls while walking, traffic accidents, accidents during snow removal, etc.



### Damage to infrastructure

Power or telephone lines are disconnected, causing disruption to electricity supply and telephone services. Roads, railroads, and other transportation networks are blocked, making travel difficult and affecting distribution and other activities.



### Building damage

Houses, garages, and other buildings collapse.



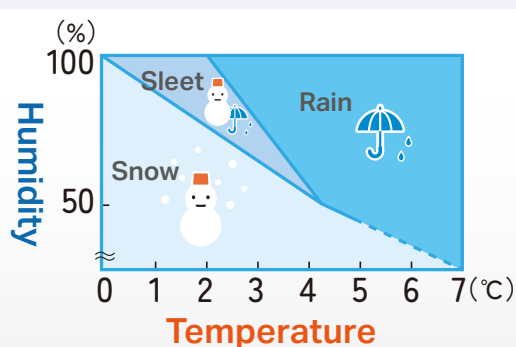
### Avalanche damage

Avalanches occur in areas with many mountains and slopes, such as Landslide Warning Areas.

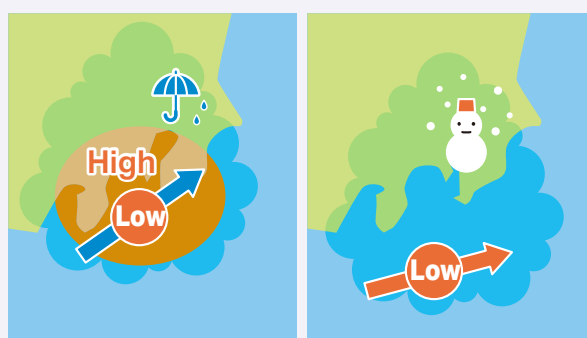


## What is a south coast low pressure system?

The heavy snowfall of 2014 was caused by a "south coast low pressure system". Heavy snow can be expected in Kofu City when a south coast low pressure system approaches the area. A south coast low pressure system is a low pressure system that moves from west to east over the southern coast of Honshu. This low pressure system usually brings rain, but cold air may cause it to instead turn into snow.



One of the indicators of whether it will rain or snow is the temperature. There is a risk of snow when the temperature is below 6 degrees Celsius.



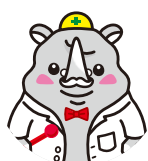
The possibility of heavy snow increases when a low pressure system passes within a distance not too close to the Kanto area.

It is said to be very difficult to predict whether it will snow or rain, since temperatures can change depending on how a south coast low pressure system develops and slight deviations in its course. If a south coast low pressure system is approaching, check weather reports frequently and prepare for snow.

Let's check together!



What happens in Kofu City during heavy snowfall?  
Do we have to worry about heavy snowfall during mild winters?



Since the Kofu Basin is surrounded by mountains on all sides, heavy snowfall could cut off transportation networks and isolate the region, which could disrupt vital functions. If there is minimal cold air flow, there is more likely to be rain than snow. However, cold snaps can occur even during mild winters. If a south coast low pressure system passes during that time, the risk of heavy snow increases, so we can never be too careful even during a mild winter.

## Heavy Snow

# Keeping yourself safe in the event of heavy snow

To minimize the damage caused by heavy snowfall, stay prepared on a daily basis and make sure you know what to do in case of an emergency.

### Advance preparation

Infrastructure and other lifelines may be disrupted during heavy snowfall. Every year, snowfall causes power outages and water stoppages in many parts of Japan, as well as accidents such as falls on snow-covered roads and traffic accidents.

Refer to pages 39 and 40 for basic stockpiles and other preparations, and prepare additional items that will be needed in case of snow.

Discuss your plan of action with your family members and prepare basic necessities well in advance.

#### Snow removal

Snow removal equipment may sell out at the last minute, so prepare in advance.



#### Cold protection items

Prepare heat packs and kerosene in advance.



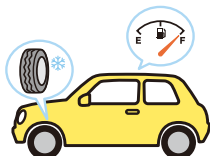
#### Remember!

#### How to walk on snowy roads without falling

- Do not put your hands in your pockets or look at your phone while walking
- Carry any luggage in your hand if possible
  - rucksacks may be destabilizing
- Wear thick clothing that cushions the body to prevent hard falls
- Wear clothing made from water-repellent materials that are less likely to get wet
- Walk straight ahead with a narrow stride

#### Car

Fit your car with studless tires or prepare tire chains and keep a full tank of gas. Store extra blankets and other cold protection items inside the car.



#### Preventing falls

Prepare boots with non-slip soles as a fall prevention measure.



## Points to keep in mind when driving on snowy roads!

Fit your car with studless tires or tire chains, and drive slower than usual, keeping a sufficient distance between vehicles. Sudden acceleration, braking, and turns are dangerous! Be especially careful at tunnel entrances and on bridges, where road surfaces are more likely to become icy!

Remember!

### If you become stranded...

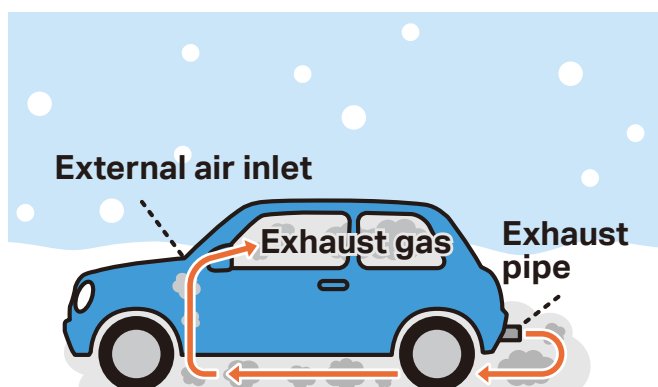
If the car exhaust pipe is blocked by snow, exhaust gases may enter the car and cause carbon monoxide poisoning, which is extremely dangerous. Shovel snow frequently or turn off the engine so that the exhaust pipe does not become buried in snow.

#### The dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning

Exhaust fumes flowing into the car can be dangerous. As a rule, turn off the engine!

#### Clear snow frequently

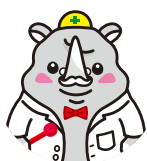
If you have no choice but to keep the engine running, make sure the exhaust pipe is not buried in snow!



### Let's check together!



What precautions should be taken during heavy snowfall?  
I'm not used to shoveling snow, so I'm worried.



Refrain from going outside during heavy snowfall! Roads may be closed and traffic disrupted, making it difficult to get around and putting people at risk of unexpected injury or accident.

Shovel snow in groups of at least two people, being careful to avoid falling snow from roofs and trees, etc. Snow gets heavier as it accumulates, so it is best to clear it often! Avoid dumping snow on roads and in waterways.