

Surviving Cold Weather cleaning! A Survival guide and procedures to making a Living and Thriving in cold weather. -

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By: Mark Saiger



My Family has been located in Northern Minnesota and North Dakota all our lives. We have been cleaning carpets in the many environments presented to us for many, many years. I am a third generation cleaner, so cleaning in cold weather is just another day **AT....I mean OUT of the office.** If you want to eat and feed your families, you don't let cold weather stop you. You adapt, survive and more importantly....**THRIVE!**

Here are some survival tips to help you prosper. I want to tell everyone, **DO NOT FEAR THE COLD!** It is not as bad as it seems and your equipment will survive. I think we tend to back off doing jobs because we do not feel like leaving the warmth of

the home. You have to convince your customer and client base that cleaning in the cold is **no big deal and you do it every day!** Give them the feeling of confidence in your cold weather "Cleaning Survival Skills" and they are more apt to call you during "the slower months".

So here we go....Here are a few of the things my family has learned over time and I am sure there are other great Northern cleaners that could add to this as well.

Build a survival kit for you, your van and your truckmount (or portable)

The minimum you should have in your van:

- 1) A shovel. You do get stuck on occasion, or it is a real nice gesture to shovel your clients sidewalk to the door. You will already have them in the palm of your hand before you even get in the home if you are using a shovel to get to them.
- 2) Warm Gloves, Boots, hat, coat, blankey....it gets cold out there! Every walked home in the cold after sliding your van into the ditch? I can tell you...It is cold!!!
- 3) Jumper Cables. If you don't need them, you will be a good Samaritan and very popular!
- 4) Salt or kitty litter for wheel traction.
- 5) Tow strap....heavy rated...just in case someone can help you get out, or vice versa!
- 6) Get some traction. A good set of tires not only helps you in the winter, but also in the summer during mud season. Make sure you have the proper load range as well to carry all that extra weight. We use a Load range "E" tire. <http://www.goodyear.com/en-US/tires/wrangler-silentarmor> **Updated 11-18-2014 these tires are not longer available, but we are very pleased with the BF Goodrich Commercial Radial TA's**

<http://www.bfgoodrichtires.com/tire-selector/category/truck-tires/commercial-t-a-traction/tire-details>

http://youtu.be/yEq_p3rxYXg

7) RV winterization solution in case your van breaks down but you still can get some winterization solution into your cleaning systems and tools and help save them from permanent damage.

8) Portable heater that operates off small bottled propane containers....you never know. It might **save you and your equipment**. Cube vans, you have a big challenge so you might need more than one, two, three....units. Keep in mind that these units will require oxygen to operate, so you will need to have a bit of venting.

http://www.amazon.com/dp/B002G51BZU/ref=as_sl_pc_tf_lc?tag=mikeboar-20&camp=213381&creative=390973&linkCode=as4&creativeASIN=B002G51BZU&adid=0EK8A78KVRDAXE9647CF&&ref-refURL=http%3A%2F%2Fmikeysboard.com%2Fsurviving-cold-weather-cleaning-a-survival-guide-and-procedures-to-making-a-living-and-thriving-in-cold-weather%2F

http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0002WRHE8/ref=as_sl_pc_tf_lc?tag=mikeboar-20&camp=213381&creative=390973&linkCode=as4&creativeASIN=B0002WRHE8&adid=1KJQGV92W36H7YD5884T&&ref-refURL=http%3A%2F%2Fmikeysboard.com%2Fsurviving-cold-weather-cleaning-a-survival-guide-and-procedures-to-making-a-living-and-thriving-in-cold-weather%2F



9) Remote starting unit for your van **or** 2 sets of keys. Keep things running and the cab of your van heated up.

http://youtu.be/oZSOd_s3pKY

10) 50 foot and 100 foot of non-tangle rope if you are cleaning on the upper floor of apartments in the cold.

<http://youtu.be/pwRgd2S1pPA>



11) Quick connector wraps if you are using shorter high pressure hoses. I really recommend for winter especially getting a longer amount of **uninterrupted** high pressure hose. Hoses tend to freeze at the connectors.

http://youtu.be/Bkwqn_fWi00

12) You might start freezing up your vacuum hoses. This can happen at joints and connectors. You might need to temporarily wrap connectors

where leaking with duct tape, or wrap in towels. We have also found that you can sometimes freeze up with your waste filter bags....so you might want to eliminate them **TEMPORARILY** on a particular day this might be occurring.

If you want to not just survive but THRIVE consider the following:

1) Get a door drape to keep the cold out and the heat in. People love that you are going the extra mile to protect their home. **UPDATED 11-18-2014 Best door protector we have come across is now the Seal-a-Door. Contact inventor and maker Ron Hunkins @ www.sealcanvas.com**



Old door drape video <http://youtu.be/BUMD9npyRjc>

New Seal-a-Door Videos <http://youtu.be/QdkP6YbU62Y>

<http://youtu.be/cUzk5Eqh0Ks>

http://youtu.be/eIM6_oSXONw

2) Floor tarps or coverings. We use canvas tarps with a poly coated tarp on top. Great moment of truth when you tarp your entire way into the cleaning areas. PS: Use them all the time and watch how people talk about how much care you took in their homes....and don't forget the corner guards! Here is a link for some tarps you might look at:

http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000ICKO74/ref=s9_simh_gw_p60_d0_i1?pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_s=center-3&pf_rd_r=0R4TRP87C4HAMR5QVRGC&pf_rd_t=101&pf_rd_p=1688200422&pf_rd_i=507846



<http://youtu.be/0jArgv4yhhU>

3) LOTS OF RAGS. You are going to be wiping up and off a lot of things in a day.

<http://youtu.be/dIjcuUY3F7w>

4) Build a spray connector for you high pressure hose to heat the hose before going into the home. Also have a female or male connector in your possession to keep water flowing in case you have to stop cleaning for a length of time.

<http://youtu.be/-YwZtnfq844>

5) Sticky Tabs can really be your friend. You get the chance to prep most of your furniture before you bring in any equipment of hoses and have less of a chance to freeze up your water line.

<http://youtu.be/Liki2up3W9E>

http://youtu.be/_QsUHIA_MB4

6) Bring everything you will need to do the cleaning into the home **BEFORE** your bring in your high pressure water line. The high pressure water line is the **LAST** thing that comes into the home in the winter.

<http://youtu.be/3BA72I2Nuos>

7) Do not let any of your wands, prespray units, rotary units, Spotters be outside for any amount of time at all...anything that could freeze and be damaged....**WILL** freeze!

8) Now that you have everything vacuumed, sticky tabbed, items moved, get your vacuum hoses to the door. At this point in really cold weather, I prefer that the suction of the hose is sucking in warm air from the home vs sit outside and such freezing cold air while you prespray with your inline pressure sprayer.



<http://youtu.be/LijtLFhQKEM>

<http://youtu.be/18qRgna-8K0>

<http://youtu.be/o317GldruSg>

9) If you have a direct drive and have a protective cover lid such as our Butler Systems, we lift the lid so the cab can be heated by the heat exchanger. Those of you with slide ins, will also be able to take advantage of the running items in the cab to help heat. Direct drives can have a bit of advantage in cold weather cleaning. With a slide in, you need air to be able to help run the motor. Plan your venting via a window or roof vent with the least amount of heat loss is very important. I have cleaned with both types of units (direct drive and slide ins). I have found the direct drives easier, but again...figure out HOW TO THRIVE in what mother nature is presenting too you.

10) Add access port holes to your van so doors can remain closed and hoses can get to the job. If you are running larger hose such as 2.5 inch, you will need to access holes. There are other options for hose ports, but here is a link to the Butler units which I am most familiar with and really pleased with.

http://www.butlersystem.com/pop_second-hose-guide-and-security-door.html

<http://youtu.be/IDoTjPeHsjc>



11) **HEAT UP THAT HIGH PRESSURE LINE** and run to the door. Get hooked up for prespraying or to begin cleaning. If you are cleaning alone and feel that your high pressure hose could freeze up while agitating or moving furniture, put a male or female end (depending on your particular set up) on the high pressure hose, get some **water flowing while it is stuffed into the vac hose**. In most cases, you will not need this unless you are cleaning in -50 degrees below zero (and yes I have cleaned in this!)



<http://youtu.be/7-3kxbPCgz4>

<http://youtu.be/CASYtxuWzbQ>

12) **Keep moving** and keep cleaning is the key to your success. It is very unlikely you will freeze up no matter the temp if water keeps moving and so do you.

13) Keep thinking ahead at all times. You will not have problems as long as you are thinking the possible problems you could have.

Remember at the end of the day, your van, and cleaning units are one of your biggest investments. Wash them off so you don't have premature rust and deterioration.

<http://youtu.be/5F7uAbZZEMc>

<http://youtu.be/PyTdEYta7MU>

Consider looking into the smallest garage or protective building you can get your unit into. Invest in some insulation and a means to keep the heat up so not to freeze up your source of income. It doesn't take much to keep things from freezing and breaking.

Getting things inside will significantly reduce your heating costs and help with the success of keeping things thawed out and safe. And have a back up heat source in your facility or cleaning unit! My furnace went out last week in our garage, but with the backup baseboard heating units we had set to engage at 50 degrees, we had no damage to shop or cleaning units until we got the furnace operational later that day.

<http://youtu.be/3VHqzGqIgos>

<http://youtu.be/wRBgcYJEvxU>

If I can pass on anything through this article is **Please do not be afraid of the cold!** You can not only make a living during cold months, but can also prosper! We sure wish you the best in your cleaning ventures. Keep some humor, especially when you think Mother Nature is just kicking you with everything shes's got! Some days it will feel like humor is the only thing you can bring with you for the day, besides your gloves! Be safe and be successful!

<http://youtu.be/wee6B8bn0WY>

<http://youtu.be/Q41Gu5GJ3lg>

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Mark Saiger is a third generation cleaner from the upper Midwest, residing in Grand Rapids, MN. He has been around the industry most of his life and been cleaning in cold weather for many years. He currently owns and operates Saiger's Steam Clean, LLC. Mark has been a former music educator and professional musician, as well as involved in many racing endeavors in his past.

Mark Saiger's YouTube Channel with many other helpful cleaning videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi9UefjEixJPGgxWPTnEUhg>