

## Cold Weather Precautions



For your health and safety, be prepared!

Exposure to cold temperatures, whether indoors or outside, can cause serious or life-threatening health problems. Infants and the elderly are particularly at risk, but anyone can be affected. To keep yourself and your family safe, you should know how to prevent cold-related health problems and what to do if a cold-weather health emergency arises.

### Dress for cold weather

- Wear a hat, and cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.
- Wear mittens, which are warmer than gloves.
- Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.

### Prepare your home and family

- Do NOT bring heating devices into the home that are intended for outdoor use, such as:
  - › propane and charcoal barbecues
  - › other cooking equipment, such as propane cookers
  - › natural gas or wood burning outdoor fire places
  - › outdoor patio heaters
 These items produce deadly carbon monoxide.
- Never leave children unattended near a space heater.
- Ensure adequate ventilation if you must use a kerosene heater.
- Maintain a sufficient supply of safe heating fuel. Use only the type of fuel your heater is designed to use—don't substitute.
- Use electric area heaters with an automatic shut-off switch and a non-glowing heating element. Do not place a space heater within 3 feet of anything that may catch on fire, such as drapes, furniture, or bedding, and never cover your space heater.
- Move family pets indoors or to an enclosure out of the elements. Likewise protect livestock or other large animals from the cold weather.
- Insulate pipes and allow faucets to drip during cold weather to avoid freezing. Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them.

Many homes will be too cold—either due to a power failure or because the heating system isn't adequate for the weather. When people must use space heaters and fireplaces to stay warm, the risk of household fires increases, as well as the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

### Recognize symptoms of too much exposure to extreme cold

- Confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and shivering are signs of hypothermia. If you experience any of these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.
- Gray, white or yellow skin discoloration, numbness or waxy skin are symptoms of frostbite. If you experience any of these symptoms, seek immediate medical attention.
- In the case of overexposure to freezing temperatures, remove wet clothing and immediately warm the body with a blanket or warm fluids like hot cider or soup. Avoid caffeine or alcohol.

For more information:  
call the Cold Precautions Infoline at 558-8035  
or visit [www.stanemergency.com](http://www.stanemergency.com)