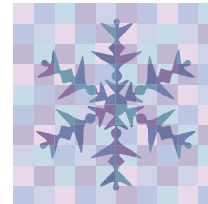


Guidelines for Cold Weather

Winter weather can be harsh, so when you are outdoors it is extremely important for you to be properly prepared, and to know the warning signs of overexposure.



Potential Cold Weather Hazards

In freezing weather the body tries to conserve heat by sending blood to the most essential organs. Unfortunately, the extremities are not high on the list of body parts receiving blood. This is why you may feel tingling in your fingers, toes, nose, cheeks, or ears. Take this tingling as a warning sign of potential frostbite or hypothermia and get inside and warm up.

Cold weather can tax the body, particularly if the individual is not in good physical condition. For that reason, care should be taken if shoveling snow, to avoid a potential heart attack.

Many people use supplemental heaters or fireplaces to stay warm. If using these, be aware that the risk of fire increases as well as the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Cold weather also often brings poor driving and walking conditions. Drive more slowly, keep all windows clear, and allow more distance between you and other vehicles. When walking, stay on established walkways and take your time.

Cold Weather Hints

Wear layered clothing for better protection from the cold. Layers can be removed to prevent perspiring and subsequent chill. Wear a cap to prevent rapid heat loss from an uncovered head and cover any exposed skin to prevent frostbite. Outer garments should be tightly woven, waterproof and hooded. Mittens, snug at the wrists, offer better protection than fingered gloves. If your clothes become wet, change them immediately.

Eat high energy foods along with warm beverages and soup. Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages. Also avoid fatigue and exhaustion during cold weather. Overexertion, such as shoveling snow or pushing a car, can strain your heart. These tasks are extremely hard work for anyone in less than prime physical condition and can bring on a heart attack, a major cause of death during and after winter storms.

Be familiar with the warning signs and treatment methods for frostbite and hypothermia. These are serious conditions that, in extreme situations, can be deadly.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding cold weather protection, please call the Department of Environmental Health and Safety at 8-8182.