



STATE OF WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Brian M. Satula
Administrator

Scott Walker
Governor

For more information contact:

Tod Pritchard
Office (608) 242-3324
Cell (608) 219-4008

Lori Getter
(608) 242-3239
(608) 516-0293

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Are You Ready for Bitter Cold?

“ReadyWisconsin warns of falling temperatures and dangerous wind chills”

(MADISON) – The National Weather Service says strong winds and plummeting temperatures will make for a bitterly cold combination this Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. These are expected to be the coldest days of the winter so far with highs only in the single digits and dangerously low wind chills. Wisconsin Emergency Management’s ReadyWisconsin campaign is urging families to take appropriate measures against the arctic chill.

Your best defense against the extreme temperatures is to stay indoors, but if you must head outside, remember to bundle up with multiple layers of clothing. In addition to wearing a tightly woven winter coat, a scarf, hat and gloves will go a long way toward keeping you safe against the elements. In temperatures this severe, frostbite can occur on exposed skin in fewer than 30 minutes, so adding those extra layers of protection is your best defense against the wind and cold. If you notice a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in your fingers, toes, ears or the tip of your nose, you may need to seek medical help right away.

Hypothermia, a deadly condition, occurs when a person’s body temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Warning signs of hypothermia include uncontrollable shivering, disorientation, slurred speech and drowsiness. Seek medical care immediately if you experience any of these symptoms.

Cold weather also puts an added strain on your body. Activities like shoveling snow or pushing a car can bring on a heart attack or worsen an existing condition.

Speaking of cars, make sure you have a winter survival kit in your vehicle just in case you are stranded in your vehicle and need that kit to survive. That kit should include water, snack foods like energy bars, a flashlight with extra batteries and a cell phone charger.

Lastly, remember that pets need special attention during this cold spell. Limit your pet’s exposure to the cold temperatures, and wipe off your dog’s legs and stomach when coming inside from a walk. Pay attention to your dog’s paws as they may bleed from snow or encrusted ice. Be sure to clean their feet when they return to the house, as dogs can digest salt, antifreeze or other potentially dangerous chemicals while licking their paws.

ReadyWisconsin is a campaign from Wisconsin Emergency Management with a mission to prepare individuals, families and businesses for emergencies and disasters. For additional winter safety tips, visit <http://ReadyWisconsin.wi.gov> or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ReadyWisconsin) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/ReadyWisconsin).

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