

## EXTREME COLD

Extremely cold air comes every winter in Wisconsin. Exposure to extreme cold can cause frostbite or hypothermia, and has the potential to be life-threatening.

## TERMS USED DURING EXTREME COLD

- **Wind Chill Advisory:** Issued when wind chill index is  $-20^{\circ}\text{F}$  for Milwaukee, La Crosse, and Green Bay National Weather Service (NWS) forecast office areas, and  $-25^{\circ}\text{F}$  for Twin Cities and Duluth NWS forecast office areas.
- **Wind Chill Warning: Issued when** wind chill index is below  $-35^{\circ}\text{F}$  for all NWS forecast office areas, except for Duluth NWS forecast office area ( $-40^{\circ}\text{F}$ ).
- **Polar Vortex:** A large area of low pressure and cold air surrounding both of the Earth's poles. There is no cause for alarm, but be prepared for colder temperatures.



ReadyWisconsin is a campaign of Wisconsin Emergency Management, a division of the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs.

ReadyWisconsin seeks to educate and empower people to prepare for and respond to disasters.

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[readywisconsin.wi.gov](http://readywisconsin.wi.gov)  
[weather.gov/safety/](http://weather.gov/safety/)

# EXTREME COLD



# SPOT

## FROSTBITE

### Signs & Symptoms



- Redness or pain in any skin area, especially extremities

### Other signs

- White or grayish-yellow skin area
- Skin that feels unusually firm or waxy
- Numbness

### Treatment

- Get indoors as soon as possible.
- Use body heat to get warm.
- DO NOT massage cold body parts.
- Drink warm liquids.
- Put on extra layers of clothes, blankets, etc.
- Remove jewelry and watches.

## HYPOTHERMIA

### Signs & Symptoms



### Adults

- Shivering
- Exhaustion
- Confusion
- Fumbling hands
- Memory loss
- Slurred speech
- Drowsiness

### Infants

- Bright red, cold skin
- Very low energy

### Treatment

- Get medical help immediately.
- Move person into warm room or shelter.
- Remove any wet clothing.
- Warm the center of the person's body.
- Give warm liquids if able to drink.
- If someone is unconscious, perform CPR until medical aid arrives.

## BEFORE

- Be aware of the weather forecast.
- If possible, avoid being outdoors.
- Bring pets indoors.
- Make sure you have at least a half tank of gas.
- Learn how to shut off the water valves in your home in case the pipes burst.
- Gather items you may need in a power outage.
- Have vehicle and home emergency kits.

## DURING

- Know the signs and symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Cover exposed skin.
- Reduce outdoor activities.
- Dress in loose layers of clothing.
- Follow precautions for space heaters and fireplaces.
- If you lose heating, move to a single room. At night, cover windows and external doors with blankets or sheets.
- Wrap pipes in insulation.
- If your pipes freeze, open faucets all the way. Heat any frozen pipe with a hair dryer. DO NOT USE AN OPEN FLAME TO THAW PIPES.
- Call 2-1-1 to find warming centers or shelters near you.
- Check on family and neighbors.

**If a person's temperature is below 95°F, get medical attention immediately.**