

Cold Weather Health Guidelines for the General Public

General Guidelines

1. Make a plan to deal with potential consequences of extreme cold temperatures and winter storms (e.g. power outage, lack of transportation). Prepare an emergency kit for your car and your home.
2. Dress in layers of loose-fitting clothing. If you start to sweat, cool off a little – wet clothes can freeze. Change wet clothing or footwear immediately.
3. Cover up! Wear gloves or mittens, and a neck tube or face mask to protect the lips, chin, cheeks, and neck.
4. Wear a hat – up to 40 percent of body heat loss can occur through the head.
5. Drink warm fluids to prevent dehydration. Avoid caffeine and alcohol containing beverages.
6. Keep moving. Limit the time spent sitting – stand up and move around.
7. Check on the elderly, persons with disabilities and those with medical conditions who live alone. Some medical conditions may increase sensitivity to the cold.
8. Maintain a heated indoor environment in the home. The *Residential Tenancies Act*, states landlords (who control the ambient temperature) must maintain a minimum indoor temperature of 20°C (68°F) from September 1 to June 15.
Note: Local by-laws or property standards may prescribe higher temperatures.
9. Do not use an oven as a heating device. Ensure space heaters are well maintained and used properly to avoid fire risk.
10. Plan ahead, listen to the weather forecast! Take emergency equipment and a cell phone when travelling and check the weather forecast before going outside.

During a cold weather warning – additional guidelines:

- * Watch closely for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.
- * Keep children, the elderly and persons with disabilities indoors when the temperature is -25°C (or colder) or -28 wind chill (or colder).

... over

Kingston
221 Portsmouth Avenue
Kingston, ON K7M 1V5
Tel: 613-549-1232
1-800-267-7875
Fax: 613-549-7896

Cloyne
P.O. Box 59
14209 Highway 41
Cloyne, ON K0H 1K0
Tel: 613-336-8989
Fax: 613-336-0522

Napanee
41 Dundas Street
Napanee, ON
K7R 1Z5
Tel: 613-354-3357
Fax: 354-6267

Sharbot Lake
P.O. Box 149
1130 Elizabeth Street
Sharbot Lake, ON K0H 2P0
Tel: 613-279-2151
Fax: 613-279-3997

- * Healthy adults should postpone outdoor activities or reduce the amount of time spent outdoors when the temperature is -25°C (or colder) or -28 wind chill (or colder). Consider cancelling outdoor activities if wind chill is -35 or colder – exposed skin can freeze in as little as five minutes.
- * Check frequently on vulnerable people such as the elderly and those with disabilities. Ensure they are in a warm environment. Monitor for signs of hypothermia or worsening medical conditions.

During a cold weather emergency – additional guidelines:

- * Danger! Outdoor conditions are hazardous – stay indoors.
- * Ensure vulnerable people such as children, the elderly and those with disabilities are in a warm, safe environment.
- * Listen to local radio stations, call or visit the websites of your local municipal office for emergency information and resources.

Cold Weather Injuries: Know What to Look For! Know What to Do!

	Frostbite	Hypothermia	
	Freezing of skin and underlying tissues such as fat, muscle and bone.	Mild - Moderate	Severe
Signs & Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pink - reddish area first sign of frostbite • Pain - area will become painful • Patches - white, waxy patches • Pricklies – affected area may feel numb or tingling 	<p>Adults</p> <p>Shivering and the “-umbles”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stumbles • Mumbles • Fumbles • Grumbles <p>Infants and Young Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cold reddish skin • low energy, tiredness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual behaviour • Cold, pale skin • Lethargy, fatigue • Unconscious • Abnormally slow heart rate or rate of breathing
What to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get out of the cold and wind • Loosen or remove tight clothing or jewellery that may restrict circulation • Slowly re-warm area using body heat • DO NOT rub or apply direct heat – this will increase tissue damage <p>Get medical help if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • colour and sensation do not return shortly following first aid treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move person to a warm and dry area • Remove wet clothing, • Cover with several layers of blankets or warm the person with your own body heat • If person is alert give a warm drink – NEVER alcohol • DO NOT use a hot water bottle or electric blanket <p>Get medical help if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first aid does not quickly control shivering. 	<p>CALL 911</p> <p>While waiting for medical help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle the person gently • Remove wet clothing • Cover with several layers of blankets or warm the person with your own body heat • Begin CPR if no pulse appears to be present • DO NOT use a hot water bottle or electric blanket

For further information:

Personal Medical Advice

Contact your family physician or Telehealth 1-866-797-0000

General cold weather health related information

KFL&A Public Health

www.kflapublichealth.ca

Where to obtain services

Contact your local municipality or township office

County of Frontenac 613-548-9400 www.frontenacounty.ca

City of Kingston 613 546-0000 www.cityofkingston.ca

County of Lennox & Addington 613 354-4883 www.lennox-addington.on.ca