

## Cold Weather Health Guidelines for Landlords and Tenants

### General Guidelines

#### Landlords can:

- develop policies and plans to maintain building structures and equipment to ensure appropriate indoor temperatures.
- maintain a minimum heated indoor environment at 20°C (68°F) or higher from September 1 to June 15<sup>1</sup>. Note: Local municipal property standards or bylaws may be higher.
- check on your most vulnerable tenants, the elderly or disabled, to ensure that they are keeping a warm indoor temperature. Hypothermia can even occur indoors when temperatures are 16°C (61°F) or lower.
- provide information in common areas for tenants on how to stay warm during cold weather;

#### Tenants can:

- keep windows closed at night.
- consider plastic window insulation which will help to stop cold drafts and slow heat loss.
- avoid drinking alcoholic or caffeinated beverages – they cause the body to lose heat more rapidly, and can lead to dehydration.
- drink warm, sweet beverages (if you are on dietary restrictions, discuss with your doctor) or broth to help maintain your body temperature.
- eat well balanced meals to stay warm and maintain an ideal body weight.
- avoid hard work in the cold, particularly for individuals with heart disease or high blood pressure. Cold weather puts an extra strain on the heart.
- take preventive action by preparing your home and car in advance for winter emergencies and by observing safety precautions during times of extreme cold weather.
- be aware of the signs of potential cold weather injuries such as frost bite and hypothermia (see *Cold weather injuries: Know what to look for, know what to do!*). Keep this information handy during the winter months.
- take immediate action if you find anyone exhibiting signs of cold weather injury and call 9-1-1 for anyone who exhibits signs of increased confusion and/or unresponsiveness.
- monitor daily weather forecasts

### During a cold weather warning – additional guidelines:

- Encourage vulnerable residents to “buddy” with another resident. Daily telephone calls to check up on one another and monitor for signs and symptoms of cold weather injuries or worsening medical conditions.

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- Check on your elderly residents that live alone, and those who are physically or mentally challenged to ensure they are warm and properly hydrated. These people may not realize the coldness of their dwelling, and may become more confused with a decrease in indoor temperature (see hypothermia).
- When the temperature is below -25°C or the wind chill is colder than -28, children and the elderly should stay indoors.

**During a cold weather emergency – additional guidelines:**

- Danger! Outdoor conditions are hazardous – stay indoors.
- Check and visit vulnerable residents often to ensure they are in a safe and warm environment.
- Listen to local radio stations, call or visit the Web site 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
		Excessive loss of body heat and lowering of internal body temperature. People may not be aware they need help.	
<b>Signs &amp; Symptoms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>Pink</b> - reddish area first sign of frostbite</li> <li>* <b>Pain</b> - area will become painful</li> <li>* <b>Patches</b>- white, waxy patches</li> <li>* <b>Pricklies</b> – affected area may feel numb or tingling</li> </ul>	<p><b>Adults</b></p> <p><b>Shivering</b> and the “-umbles”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stumbles</li> <li>• Mumbles</li> <li>• Fumbles</li> <li>• Grumbles</li> </ul> <p><b>Infants and Young Children:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cold reddish skin</li> <li>• low energy, tiredness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Unusual behaviour</li> <li>* Cold, pale skin</li> <li>* Lethargy, fatigue</li> <li>* Unconscious</li> <li>* Abnormally slow heart rate or rate of breathing</li> </ul>
<b>What to do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Get out of the cold and wind</li> <li>* Loosen or remove tight clothing or jewellery that may restrict circulation</li> <li>* Slowly re-warm area using body heat</li> <li>* DO NOT rub or apply direct heat – this will increase tissue damage</li> </ul> <p><b>Get medical help if:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* colour and sensation do not return shortly following first aid treatment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Move person to a warm and dry area</li> <li>* Remove wet clothing,</li> <li>* Cover with several layers of blankets or warm the person with your own body heat</li> <li>* If person is alert give a warm drink – NEVER alcohol</li> <li>* DO NOT use a hot water bottle or electric blanket</li> </ul> <p><b>Get medical help if:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• first aid does not quickly control shivering.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CALL 9-1-1</b></p> <p>While waiting for medical help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Handle the person gently</li> <li>* Remove wet clothing</li> <li>* Cover with several layers of blankets or warm the person with your own body heat</li> <li>* Begin CPR if no pulse appears to be present</li> <li>* DO NOT use a hot water bottle or electric blanket</li> </ul>

### 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](http://www.kflapublichealth.ca)

#### Where to obtain services

Contact your local municipality or township office

County of Frontenac 613-548-9400 [www.frontenacounty.ca](http://www.frontenacounty.ca)

City of Kingston 613 546-0000 [www.cityofkingston.ca](http://www.cityofkingston.ca)

County of Lennox & Addington 613 354-4883 [www.lennox-addington.on.ca](http://www.lennox-addington.on.ca)