

KFL&A Public Health Extreme Cold Weather Response Plan

Cold weather, combined with wind, can cause serious injuries and death. KFL&A Public Health has adopted a series of cold weather thresholds designed to advise the general public, healthcare, and community service providers on appropriate measures they can take to reduce risk of cold weather injuries.

Cold weather injuries, such as frostbite and hypothermia, are preventable. People who are most vulnerable and at the highest risk of dying from cold weather injuries include the elderly, infants (less than 1 year), people who have chronic physical and mental disabilities, and people who are homeless or socially isolated.

KFL&A Public Health monitors the forecasted weather conditions from Environment Canada. Cold weather health notices, warnings and notifications are issued when extreme cold temperatures or wind chill is forecast to occur. When the likely potential that a cold weather threshold will be reached within the next 24 to 48 hours, KFL&A Public Health will activate the extreme cold weather response plan.

Cold Threshold	KFL&A Public Health Messages and Response Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routine seasonal winter weather 	<p><i>Key Public Health Messages:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stay Warm, Stay Dry Avoid lengthy and strenuous outdoor activity Help others – the elderly or people with disabilities living alone Know the signs of cold injuries and know what to do <p><i>Key Response Actions:</i> Health information is posted on the KFL&A website and updated information is sent directly to community service providers.</p>
Cold Weather Health WARNING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A daily predicted temperature low of -15°C (without wind chill) <p>OR</p>	<p><i>Key Public Health temperature-specific messaging with a daily predicted temperature low of -15°C or colder:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Take action to avoid injuries from the cold; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover unprotected skin Avoid prolonged outdoor exposure Drink warm fluids (no alcohol or caffeine) Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia Check on the elderly or people with disabilities living alone Maintain a warm indoor environment, ideally 20°C or warmer. <p><i>Key Response Actions:</i> At -15°C, KFL&A Public Health will issue a cold weather health notice directly to community service providers of vulnerable populations in affected areas.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">... over</p>

Kingston
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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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Canada forecasts a wind chill of -28 or colder <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Canada issues a severe winter storm warning 	<p><i>Key Public Health temperature-specific messaging with a daily predicted temperature low of -25°C or wind chill of -28 or colder or a severe winter storm warning:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep children and the elderly indoors¹ 2. Adults should reduce time spent outdoors 3. Check face and extremities frequently for signs of frostbite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exposed skin can freeze in as little as 10 to 30 minutes.² <p><i>Key Public Health temperature-specific messaging with a daily predicated wind chill of -35 or colder, or a severe winter storm warning:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check face and extremities frequently for signs of frostbite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exposed skin can freeze in as little as 5 minutes.² 2. Serious risk of hypothermia if outdoors for long periods 3. Consider re-scheduling outdoor recreational activities 4. Check frequently on the elderly and other vulnerable people <p><i>Key Response Actions:</i></p> <p>KFL&A Public Health will issue a cold weather health warning via media release to area residents and directly to key stakeholders. This information will be posted on the KFL&A Public Health website.</p>
<p>Cold Weather Health EMERGENCY</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extreme wind chill of -55 or colder <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cold weather warning issued <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of a contributing factor such as power outage, or critical infrastructure failure 	<p><i>Key Public Health temperature-specific messaging with a daily predicated wind chill of -55 or colder, or a cold weather warning and the existence of a contributing factor:</i></p> <p>Core Public Health cold weather messages plus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Danger! 2. Outdoor conditions are hazardous² <p>⇒ STAY INDOORS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Ensure vulnerable individuals are in a warm, safe environment <p><i>Key Response Actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue a cold weather health emergency notification to media and stakeholders • Possible activation in whole or in part of KFL&A Public Health’s Emergency Plan • Possible activation of emergency municipal control groups and plans • Inform provincial health officials • Advise all stakeholders and media when emergency status is lifted • Information will be posted on the KFL&A Public Health website.
<p>¹2007 Canadian Paediatric Society. Frostbite Fact Sheet. www.caringforkids.cps.ca</p> <p>²2003 Environment Canada. Wind Chill Hazards and Risk of Frostbite Guidelines. http://www.msc-smc.ec.gc.ca/education/windchill/windchill_threshold_chart_e.cfm</p>	

For further information:

Personal Medical Advice: Contact your family physician or Telehealth 1-866-797-0000

General cold weather health 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.frontenaccounty.ca

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

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