

EXTREME COLD WEATHER HEALTH RESPONSE PLAN

Type	Threshold	Key Public Health Messages	Key Response Actions
ROUTINE	Seasonal Winter Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay Warm, Stay Dry • Avoid lengthy and strenuous outdoor activity. • Help others - check on the elderly or people with disabilities who live alone. • Know the signs of cold injuries and know what to do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health information is posted on KFL&A Public Health website. • Updated information is sent directly to community partner agencies.
COLD ALERT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A daily predicted temperature of -15°C or lower (without wind chill) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take action to avoid injuries from the cold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover unprotected skin, dress in layers and wear an outer layer that is wind resistant. • Avoid prolonged outdoor exposure. • Avoid rapid body cooling after sweating when outdoors. • Drink warm fluids (no alcohol or caffeine). • Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. 2. Check on the elderly or people with disabilities who live alone. 3. Maintain a minimum indoor temperature of 20°C. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KFL&A Public Health will issue a cold weather health alert directly to community partner agencies. • This group includes municipalities, schools, daycares, acute care facilities, long term care homes, neighbourhood/faith groups, social services and emergency service providers.
COLD WARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A daily predicted temperature of -25°C or lower OR • Environment Canada forecasts a wind chill of -28 or colder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature -25°C or Wind Chill is -28 or colder: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep children indoors.¹ 2. Check ears, nose, cheeks, chin, fingers and toes often for signs of frostbite. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unprotected skin can freeze in as little as 10-30 minutes.² • Wind Chill -40 or colder: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unprotected skin can freeze in as little as 5 minutes.² 2. Serious risk of hypothermia if cold, or cold and wet, and outdoors for long periods. 3. Consider postponing outdoor activities. 4. Check frequently on vulnerable populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KFL&A Public Health will issue a cold weather health warning directly to community partner agencies and via media release. • This information will be posted on the KFL&A Public Health website.
COLD EMERGENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A daily predicted temperature of -35°C or lower OR • Extreme wind chill of -55 or colder OR • Cold weather health warning issued and the existence of a contributing factor such as power outage, or critical infrastructure failure 	<p><i>Core cold weather messages plus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Danger! Outdoor conditions are hazardous² <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stay indoors. ⇒ Ensure vulnerable individuals are in a warm, safe environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KFL&A will issue a cold weather health emergency notice to community partner agencies and media. • Activation in whole or in part of the KFL&A Public Health Emergency Response Plan. • Possible activation of emergency municipal or community control groups. • Inform provincial health officials. • Post information on KFL&A website. • Advise all community partner agencies and media when emergency status is lifted.

¹ 2007 Canadian Paediatric Society. Frostbite Fact Sheet. <http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/keepkidssafe/frostbite.htm>

² 2010 Environment Canada. Wind Chill Hazards and what to do. <http://www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&n=5FBF816A-1#table1>