

EXTREME COLD RESPONSE

Background:

Extreme cold consists of temperatures significantly lower than normal and can cause a number of health and safety concerns, including frostbite, hypothermia, carbon monoxide poisoning and fires from alternative heating sources.

When the outside temperature is extremely low, take these precautions:

- Be aware of the fire danger from space heaters and candles; keep such devices away from all flammable materials.
- Install recommended smoke and carbon monoxide detectors (at least one of each per floor in your home).
- Stay indoors and use safe heating sources.
- Do not use charcoal or other fuel-burning devices, such as grills, that produce carbon monoxide indoors.
- Stay dry and in wind protected areas outdoors.
- Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. Wear mittens, a hat and cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids and eat high-caloric foods.
- Watch for signs of frostbite—skin appears white and waxy, numbness or no feeling in that area and/or possible blisters.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia—shivering and numbness, confusion or dizziness, stumbling and weakness, slow or slurred speech and shock.
- Go to a medical facility immediately if you or someone you know is experiencing signs of hypothermia or frostbite.
- Call the Hypothermia Hotline at 1 (800) 535-7252 if you see a homeless person stranded in the cold. Vans will transport homeless individuals to a shelter

