

Wind Chill Hazards and Winter Safety

Wind chill	Risk of frostbite	Health concern	What to do
0 to -9°C	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slight increase in discomfort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dress warmly, with the outside temperature in mind.
-10 to -27°C	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncomfortable. Risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods without adequate protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dress in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. Wear a hat, mittens, and scarf. Keep active.
-28 to -39°C	Increasing risk: exposed skin can freeze in 10 to 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check face and extremities (fingers, toes, ears, and nose) for numbness or whiteness Risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods without adequate protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dress in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. Cover exposed skin: wear a hat, mittens, and a scarf, neck tube, or face mask. Keep active.
-40 to -47°C	High risk: exposed skin can freeze in 5 to 10 minutes*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check face and extremities (fingers, toes, ears, and nose) for numbness or whiteness (frostbite). Risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods without adequate protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dress in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. Cover all exposed skin: wear a hat, mittens, and a scarf, neck

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tube, or face mask. Keep active.
WARNING LEVEL* -48 to -54°C	High risk: exposed skin can freeze in 2 to 5 minutes*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check face and extremities frequently for numbness or whiteness (frostbite). Serious risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be careful. Dress very warmly in layers of clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. Cover all exposed skin: wear a hat, mittens and a scarf, neck tube or face mask. Be ready to cut short or cancel outdoor activities. Keep active.
-55°C and colder	High risk: exposed skin can freeze in less than 2 minutes	DANGER! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor conditions are hazardous. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay indoors

Home Heating Safety - Have furnaces, chimneys, fireplaces, wood and coal stoves inspected and cleaned before another winter of use. Test batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Other good steps to take to get one's home ready for winter include:

- Make sure flashlights are available throughout the house and that they have fresh batteries. Winter storms can lead to power outages.
- Cut down on heating costs. Insulate the home by installing storm windows or covering the inside of windows with plastic to keep cold air out.
- Develop a fire escape plan and practice it with everyone who lives in the home.
- Have a disaster supply kit ready should winter storms hit. The kit should include a three-day supply of food and water per person, flashlight, battery-powered or hand-crank radio and extra batteries. Other things to include for the winter include:

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- Warm coats, gloves or mittens, hats, boots and warm clothing for all household members, along with extra blankets.
- An alternate way to heat the home, such as a fireplace, or wood or coal burning stove.

Space Heaters - With heating costs rising, many people are using alternate sources of heat to cut down on heating bills. The Red Cross recommends that people look for a model that shuts off automatically if the heater falls over. Other safety tips include:

- Place the heater on a level, hard and non-flammable surface in the home.
- Keep all potential sources of fuel like paper, clothing, bedding, curtains or rugs at least three feet away from space heaters, stoves, or fireplaces.
- Portable heaters and fireplaces should never be left unattended. Turn off space heaters and make sure any embers in the fireplace are extinguished before going to bed or leaving home.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Pet Safety – Cold weather can be particularly difficult on our pets that rely on us for their well-being, especially for outdoor dogs and cats.

- If possible, bring your pets inside during cold winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas and make sure they have access to non-frozen drinking water.
- If the animals are outside, make sure their access to food and water is not blocked by snow drifts, ice or other obstacles.
- If pets cannot come indoors, make sure they are protected by a dry, draft-free enclosure large enough to allow them to sit and lie down, but small enough to hold in the pet's body heat. Raise the floor a few inches off the ground and cover it with cedar shavings or straw. Turn the enclosure away from the wind and cover the doorway with waterproof burlap or heavy plastic.