
For Immediate Release

#91-19

**THE NEW YORK CITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT AND
HEALTH DEPARTMENT ADVISE NEW YORKERS TO PREPARE FOR EXTREME
COLD WEATHER**

Single-digit wind chills expected overnight through Thursday morning

December 18, 2019 — The New York City Emergency Management Department and the Health Department advise New Yorkers to prepare for extreme cold weather. According to the latest National Weather Service (NWS) forecast, an arctic front moves into the area this evening bringing low temperatures through the end of the week. As winds gradually increase Wednesday evening, with gusts as high as 45 mph, wind chill values will be in the single digits through Thursday morning. Thursday's high temperature is in the mid-20s, but wind chill values will be in the teens through early Friday morning. Friday remains cold, with wind chill values around 20. Temperatures increase to the upper 30s on Saturday, with a high temperature in the mid-40s on Sunday.

“As cold and blustery conditions move into our area, we want to advise you to take necessary precautions to stay safe. We recommend that you stay indoors as much as possible, but if you have to go out, bundle up and dress warmly,” **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Deanne Criswell** said. “Remember to check on elderly family members and others who may be at risk due to the cold weather.”

“Freezing cold temperatures pose a danger for all New Yorkers, especially those at risk for hypothermia like people experiencing homelessness, those without heat at home, and those who drink heavily or use drugs and may become incapacitated outdoors,” **Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot** said. “I’d advise everyone to stay inside as much as possible. For those who venture out, dress warmly and wear layers. If the heat at home isn’t working, call 311. Stay alert for signs of hypothermia, like intense shivering or dizziness, and anyone who experiences these symptoms should seek medical attention or call 911. And of course, be a buddy and check on family, friends and neighbors — especially older adults or people with disabilities — to make sure they are safe inside and have heat.”

Cold weather can cause or worsen health problems. Certain individuals, including the unsheltered homeless, people with disabilities and those with access and functional needs are at an increased risk for injuries, illness or death. Others at an increased risk also include people who drink heavily or use drugs and become incapacitated outdoors, or those who live in homes without heat, are 65 years or older, infants, have certain medical conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes; and have serious mental health conditions or developmental disabilities. To learn more about winter weather safety, visit the Health Department’s interactive [online infographic](#).

Prolonged exposure to cold can lead to frostbite — which often results in red and painful or pale

skin — and hypothermia. Symptoms of hypothermia include intense shivering, dizziness, trouble speaking, lack of coordination, sluggishness or drowsiness, confusion, or shallow breathing. If you see symptoms of hypothermia or frostbite, call 911 and follow instructions, or go to the emergency room.

Safety Tips

- Stay indoors as much as possible.
- Wear dry, warm clothing and cover exposed skin if you have to go outdoors. Keep fingertips, earlobes, and noses covered. Wear a hat, hood, scarf, and gloves.
- Return indoors when shivering. Shivering is an important first sign that the body is losing heat.
- Be safe when working outside. Working outdoors increases risks for cold-related illness, injury or death. Employers must ensure safe work practices, provide appropriate protective equipment, and train workers on cold and winter weather safety.
- Limit alcohol intake. Drinking alcohol may make you feel warmer but it causes your body to lose heat faster and impairs judgment. As a result, alcohol actually increases your chances of hypothermia and frostbite.
- Immediately tell your building superintendent, property manager or owner if you do not have heat. Call 311 if the problem is not fixed quickly and go to a warm place, such as a friend's or family member's home. If you stay at home, wear layers of clothing.
- Check on family, friends and neighbors who may need help in cold weather — especially older adults or people with disabilities — to make sure they are safe inside and have heat.

Code Blue

A Code Blue Weather Emergency notice is issued when the temperature is forecast to drop to 32 degrees Fahrenheit or less between 4 p.m. and 8 a.m., including National Weather Service calculations for wind chill values. No one who is homeless and seeking shelter in New York City during a Code Blue will be denied. Should you see an individual who appears to be homeless and in need out in the cold, please call 311 and an outreach team will be dispatched to offer assistance.

For more safety tips, visit [NYC.gov/EmergencyManagement](https://nyc.gov/EmergencyManagement). Any New York City tenants without heat or hot water should call 311, visit 311 online at [NYC.gov/311](https://nyc.gov/311), or use the 311 mobile application (311MOBILE on Android and iOS devices) to file a complaint. For more information about tenant resources, visit [NYC.gov/HPD](https://nyc.gov/HPD).

The Department of Buildings (DOB) has issued a weather advisory to remind property owners, contractors, and crane operators to take precautionary measures and secure their construction sites, buildings, and equipment during high winds expected to begin this afternoon, Wednesday, December 18 and continuing into tomorrow, Thursday, December 19. The department will perform random spot-check inspections of construction sites around the city. If sites are not



NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

nyc.gov/emergencymanagement

Press Office: 718-422-4888

secured, the department will take immediate enforcement action — issuing violations and Stop Work Orders, where necessary. For more information, visit nyc.gov/DOB.

New Yorkers are also encouraged to sign up for Notify NYC, the City’s free emergency notification system, to stay informed on the latest extreme weather updates and other emergencies. To learn more about the Notify NYC program or to sign up, visit nyc.gov/NotifyNYC or call 311, or download the free app for your Android or Apple device. You can also follow [@NotifyNYC](https://twitter.com/NotifyNYC) on Twitter.

MEDIA CONTACT: Omar Bourne/Justin Bennett (718) 422-4888

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