



New York City Office of Emergency Management

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Press Office: 718-422-4888

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#14-15

NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ISSUES COLD WEATHER ALERT

Sub-zero wind chills and dangerously cold temperatures expected Monday night through Tuesday

Seniors, infants, the homeless, and those with chronic medical conditions are at increased risk of health problems from the cold

February 23, 2015 — The New York City Office of Emergency Management today issued a cold weather alert for dangerously cold temperatures and sub-zero wind chills Monday night, February 23, through Tuesday February 24, 2015. Temperatures Monday night will be around 2 degrees, with wind chills as low as 10 degrees below zero. High temperatures Tuesday will be 20 degrees, with wind chills between -5 and 5 degrees. Temperatures remain around 20 degrees Tuesday night, with wind chills between 10 and 15 degrees. New Yorkers are asked to exercise caution during this period of extreme cold weather, and be prepared for slick conditions, as sub-zero temperatures could result in the formation of black ice on untreated roads and walkways.

“I know Sunday was a nice day, but we’re not out of the woods yet. Tonight and tomorrow are going to be dangerously cold, so you have to bundle up,” said Joseph Esposito, Commissioner of New York City Emergency Management. “When you’re outside, listen to your body. If you begin to feel the effects of the cold, get inside as quickly as possible and get help. Don’t forget to take your time when you’re driving or walking around outside; there may be some black ice on the roads because of these cold temperatures.”

Cold Weather Safety

New Yorkers are advised to check on their neighbors, friends, and relatives — especially the elderly and those with disabilities and access and functional needs. People most likely to be exposed to dangerous cold include those who lack shelter, work outdoors and/or live in homes with malfunctioning or inadequate heat. Seniors, infants, people with chronic cardiovascular or lung conditions, people using alcohol or drugs and people with cognitive disabilities, such as dementia, serious mental illness or developmental disability, are at increased risk.

Safety Tips

New Yorkers are also encouraged to take the following precautions:

- Stay indoors as much as possible.
- Prolonged exposure to extreme cold weather can be dangerous. If you suspect a person is suffering from frostbite or hypothermia, call 911 to get medical help. While waiting for assistance, help the person by getting them to a warm place if possible, removing any damp clothing and covering them with warm blankets.

- When outdoors, wear warm clothing and cover exposed skin. Use multiple layers to maintain warmth.
- Wear a hat, hood, or scarf, as most heat is lost through the head.
- Keep fingertips, earlobes, and noses covered if you go outside.
- Keep clothing dry; if a layer becomes wet, remove it.
- Wear sturdy boots that provide traction to reduce slipping. Use handrails when using stairs.
- Exercise caution and avoid slippery surfaces; some ice may not be visible.
- Have heightened awareness of cars, particularly when approaching or crossing intersections.
- Seniors should take extra care outdoors to avoid slips and falls from icy conditions.
- Shivering is an important first sign that the body is losing heat. Shivering is a signal to return indoors.
- Drinking alcohol may make you think you feel warmer but actually increases your chances of hypothermia and frostbite.
- Cold weather puts an extra strain on the heart. If you have heart disease or high blood pressure, follow your doctor's advice about shoveling snow or performing other hard work in the cold. Remember, your body is already working hard just to stay warm, so don't overdo it.
- Workers in construction and utilities, and others who spend a lot of time outdoors are at risk for cold-related disorders. Employers should implement safe work practices, provide appropriate protective equipment, and train workers on health effects of cold weather, proper prevention techniques, and treatment of cold-related disorders.

For Motorists

- Drive slowly. Posted speed limits are for ideal weather conditions. Vehicles take longer to stop on snow and ice than on dry pavement.
- Use major streets or highways for travel whenever possible; these roadways will be cleared first.
- Four-wheel drive vehicles may make it easier to drive on snow-covered roads, but they do not stop quicker than other vehicles.
- Keep the name and phone number of at least one local towing service in your car in case you break down or become stuck in snow.
- If you get stuck on the road, stay with your car and contact a towing company.

Heating Tips

- Report any loss of heat or hot water to property managers immediately, and call 311.
- Never use a gas stove to heat your home. Carbon monoxide is colorless and odorless and overtime will build-up in your blood causing symptoms that can easily be mistaken for the flu – headaches, fatigue, nausea and drowsiness. Sometimes your pets will show symptoms first. If more than one person in your family is showing symptoms, call 911.
- Never use a kerosene or propane space heater, charcoal or gas grill, or generator indoors or near the home.
- Electric space heaters are the only kind of space heater legal in New York City and should turn off automatically when tipped over, and should be kept far from combustible and flammable objects, as well as water.

Homeless Services

Special protocols are in effect when the temperature drops below 32 degrees. No one seeking shelter in New York City will be denied. Anyone who sees a homeless individual or family out in the cold should call 311 immediately and an outreach team will be dispatched to assist them.

More Information

For more helpful tips for staying warm and safe, view NYC Emergency Management's [winter weather video](#), or visit NYC.gov/EmergencyManagement. New Yorkers are also encouraged to sign up for Notify NYC, the City's free emergency notification system. Through Notify NYC, New Yorkers can receive phone calls, text messages, and/or emails alerts about traffic and transit disruptions and other emergencies. To sign up for Notify NYC, call 311, visit NYC.gov/notifynyc, or follow @NotifyNYC on Twitter.

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