
For Immediate Release

#6-21

**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT AND THE HEALTH
DEPARTMENT URGE NEW YORKERS TO PREPARE FOR EXTREME COLD
WEATHER TO END THE WEEK**

Gusty winds and frigid temperatures lead to sub-zero wind chills

January 28, 2021 — The New York City Emergency Management Department and Health Department urge New Yorkers to prepare for extremely cold weather over the next few days. According to the latest National Weather Service (NWS) forecast, an arctic air mass accompanied by gusty winds will bring frigid conditions leading into the weekend. Gusty winds are in the forecast today and tomorrow with speeds up to 40 mph possible early tomorrow morning and afternoon. Temperatures tonight will dip into the mid-teens with wind chills in the single digits, dropping to below zero Friday morning. Temperatures warm slightly on Friday into the mid-20s, but wind chills will remain in the single digits throughout the entire day into late Saturday morning. Temperatures return to the low-30s by Sunday afternoon.

“With the arctic blast affecting our area over the next few days, it is imperative that New Yorkers take the necessary precautions to stay warm,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Deanne Criswell**. “Stay indoors as much as possible and bundle up if you have to go out. Remember to virtually check in on your friends, family or neighbors who may be most vulnerable to the extreme cold.”

“The weather heading our way is dangerous, but it presents a particular risk to people experiencing homelessness or who use drugs or alcohol and may become incapacitated outdoors,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. “We want New Yorkers to stay safe so please remain inside as much as possible. If you do go outdoors, layer up and wear a face covering. Call 311 if your heat at home isn’t working. New Yorkers should also call 311 if they see someone outdoors who appears to be experiencing homelessness.”

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.

General Cold Weather Tips

- During cold weather, wear dry, warm clothing and cover exposed skin. Keep fingertips, earlobes, and noses covered. Wear a hat, hood, scarf, and gloves. Stay alert for signs of hypothermia, like intense shivering or dizziness, and anyone who experiences these symptoms should seek medical attention or call 911.
- 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.
- 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 or family member’s home (while maintaining proper physical distance and wearing a face mask). If you stay at home, wear layers of clothing.
- Eat. Food provides your body with energy to produce heat and drinking helps you avoid dehydration.

Housing Preservation and Development

Building owners are legally required to provide heat and hot water to their tenants. Hot water must be provided 365 days per year at a constant minimum temperature of 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Heat must be provided between October 1 and May 31, i.e. “Heat Season.” During “Heat Season,” building owners must maintain indoor temperatures at 68 degrees when the temperatures fall below 55 degrees outside during the day (6 a.m. to 10 p.m.) and a minimum of 62 degrees indoors overnight (10 p.m. to 6 a.m.) regardless of outdoor temperatures.

If an apartment lacks appropriate heat, a tenant should first attempt to notify the building owner, managing agent or superintendent. If heat is not restored, the tenant should register an official complaint via 311. Tenants can 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. Hearing-impaired tenants can register complaints via a Touchtone Device for the Deaf TDD at (212) 504-4115. The center is open 24-hours a day, seven-days a week.

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) will take measures to ensure that the building owner is complying with the law. This may include contacting the building’s owner and/or sending an inspector to verify the complaint and issue a violation directing the owner to restore heat and hot water if appropriate. If the owner fails to comply and does not restore service, HPD may initiate repairs through its Emergency Repair Program and bill the landlord for the cost of the work. HPD may also initiate legal action against properties that are issued heat violations, and owners who incur multiple heat violations are subject to litigation seeking maximum litigation penalties and continued scrutiny on heat and other code deficiencies.

Winter weather heating tips

If you lose heat or power, take measures to trap existing warm air, and safely stay warm until heat returns:

- Insulate your home as much as possible. Hang blankets over windows and doorways and stay in a well-insulated room while heat or power is out.
- If you use an electric space heater, plug it directly into the wall. Do not use an extension cord. Place it away from flammable items including clothing.
- Dress warmly. Wear hats, scarves, gloves, and layered clothing.
- For working fireplaces, use them for heat and light, but be sure to keep the damper open for ventilation.
- Open your faucets to a steady drip so pipes do not freeze.
- Improper use of portable heating equipment can lead to fire or dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. Take precautions to ensure you are heating your home safely and make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector. Do not heat your home with a gas stove or oven, charcoal grill, or kerosene, propane, or oil-burning heaters.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) can provide emergency assistance for New Yorkers who are in danger of not being able to pay for heat or make repairs to heating equipment. If you are a low-to-moderated income New Yorker who needs help keeping you home warm, you may qualify for assistance from HEAP at <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/>.

Code Blue

A Code Blue Weather Emergency notice is issued when the temperature or wind chill is forecast to drop to 32 degrees Fahrenheit between 4 p.m. and 8 a.m. 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. During Code Blue Weather emergencies, experienced outreach teams work to connect unsheltered New Yorkers with resources including shelters, drop-in centers and safe havens and stabilization beds. Street homeless outreach teams will proactively contact vulnerable individuals on their Code Blue Priority Lists regularly and repeatedly to ensure their health and safety is protected during the extreme cold and to encourage them to accept services, including transportation to a shelter placement. DSS also coordinates borough-level Code Blue efforts directly with City partners, including but not limited to EMS, DSNY, and the Parks Department.

Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)

The NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) funds residential and crisis services for young people. Drop-in centers offer overnight services; crisis services programs offer short-term housing and support services. For more information on available



programs and ages served, visit [DYCD RHY Services](#) or contact DYCD Community Connect at CommunityConnect@dycd.nyc.gov or 1-800-246-4646 and 1-646-343-6800.

Department of Buildings and Department of Transportation

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. The department will perform random spot-check inspections of construction sites around the city. If sites are not secured, the department will take immediate enforcement action — issuing violations and Stop Work Orders, where necessary. The Department of Transportation (DOT) is advising open restaurant owners to secure their outdoor furniture and be prepared to take down umbrellas and tents due to the gusty winds.

Stay Informed

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 sign up for Notify NYC, download the free mobile application, visit [NYC.gov/NotifyNYC](#), call 311, or follow @NotifyNYC on Twitter. For more winter weather information, visit [NYC.gov/WinterWeather](#).

MEDIA CONTACT: Ines Bebea/Omar Bourne (718) 422-4888

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