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MAYOR DE BLASIO URGES NEW YORKERS TO PREPARE FOR COLD WEATHER

Cold weather expected Wednesday and Thursday nights, with temperatures dropping into the 20s

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

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today urged New Yorkers to prepare for upcoming cold weather.

“It’s going to be cold Wednesday and Thursday night, with a colder wind chill,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “Stay indoors if you can and bundle up if you must go outside.”

According to forecasts, cold weather is expected to return to the New York City area Wednesday and Thursday nights. Temperatures Wednesday night are forecast to fall below 32 and reach the low 20s with wind chill values between 15 and 20 degrees. Daytime temperatures Thursday will be in the mid-30s, and will drop to the mid-20s Thursday night, with wind chill values in the teens. Gusty winds are expected Wednesday night, with sustained winds of 15-20 mph and gusts around 30 mph.

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 impairments (like dementia, serious mental illness or developmental disability) are at increased risk.

Homeless Services

A Code Blue Weather Emergency notice is issued when the weather drops to 32 degrees or below. 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. Code Blue Weather Emergencies includes the following options for the homeless:

- **Shelters:** During a Code Blue, homeless adults can access any shelter location for single individuals. Beds are available system-wide to accommodate anyone brought in by outreach teams or walk-ins.
- **Drop-in centers:** All drop-in centers are open 24 hours a day when Code Blue procedures are in effect, taking in as many as people as possible for the duration of inclement weather. Drop-in staff also can make arrangements for homeless individuals at other citywide facilities.
- **Safe havens and stabilization beds:** Chronically homeless individuals may be transported to these low-threshold housing options, where they may go directly from the street to a bed.

Safety Tips

New Yorkers are also encouraged to take the following precautions:

- 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.
- 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 it 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 performing 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.

Health problems resulting from prolonged exposure to cold include hypothermia, frostbite and exacerbation of chronic heart and lung conditions. Recognize the signs and symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite:

- **Hypothermia** is a life-threatening condition where the body temperature is abnormally low. Symptoms may include shivering, slurred speech, sluggishness, drowsiness, unusual behavior, confusion, dizziness, and shallow breathing. Some people, such as infants, seniors, and those with chronic diseases and substance abuse problems can get sick quicker. Check on friends, relatives, and neighbors who may need assistance to ensure they are adequately protected from the cold.
- **Frostbite** is a serious injury to a body part frozen from exposure to the cold. It most often affects extremities like fingers and toes or exposed areas such as ears or parts of the face. Redness and pain may be the first warning of frostbite. Other symptoms include numbness or skin that appears pale, firm, or waxy.

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