



New York City Office of Emergency Management

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Press Office: 718-422-4888

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#12-15

NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ISSUES COLD WEATHER ALERT

Cold temperatures and high winds Thursday, with subzero wind chills and dangerously frigid temperatures expected Thursday night into Friday

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

February 18, 2015 — The New York City Office of Emergency Management today issued a cold weather alert for extremely cold temperatures and subzero wind chills Thursday, February 19, 2015. High temperatures Thursday will be in the upper 20s, with wind chills of zero degrees. High winds are expected to begin Thursday afternoon and continue through Thursday night, with sustained winds of 20- 30 mph and gusts up to 35- 40mph. Temperatures remain around zero Thursday night, but wind chills will be as low as 15 to 20 degrees below zero. Temperatures remain extremely cold Friday, with a high near 15 degrees and wind chills as low as 2 degrees. New Yorkers are asked to exercise caution during this period of extreme cold weather.

“The best way to deal with the cold weather is to stay indoors. It’s going to get dangerously cold on Thursday night and you don’t want to be outdoors if you don’t have to be,” said Joseph Esposito, Commissioner of New York City Emergency Management. “Use common sense – if you have to be outdoors, bundle up. Don’t take these temperatures lightly.”

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 impairments such as from 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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.

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.