

From: Bourne, Omar [<mailto:obourne@OEM.NYC.GOV>]

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Subject: NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT REMIND NEW YORKERS TO PREPARE FOR EXTREME COLD ON THURSDAY

For Immediate Release

#74-18

**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT REMIND
NEW YORKERS TO PREPARE FOR EXTREME COLD ON THURSDAY**

Temperatures plummet well below normal Thursday, with highs in the low to mid-20s and wind chill values as low as single digits

Unsheltered homeless individuals, older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at increased risk of health problems from the extreme cold

November 21, 2018 — The New York City Emergency Management Department and the Health Department continue to remind individuals to prepare for extremely cold temperatures on Thursday. According to the National Weather Service forecast, an arctic front will cause temperatures to rapidly drop Wednesday evening into Thursday. Temperatures will drop into the upper teens on Wednesday night. Temperatures Thursday will be in the low to mid-20s with wind chill values as low as single digits. Unseasonably low temperatures continue Friday, with highs in the lower 30s. Seasonable temperatures return on Saturday, with highs around 50 degrees.

High winds are also in the forecast, with gusts up to 45 mph possible Wednesday evening. Winds Thursday are forecast to be 15 mph to 20 mph sustained, with gusts 25 mph to 35 mph. Winds are expected to diminish Thursday night. A snow squall is in the forecast for New York City for Wednesday afternoon, with a coating to less than an inch of snow possible.

Cold weather can cause or worsen health problems. Certain individuals are at an increased risk for injuries, illness or death, such as those who drink heavily or use drugs and becomes incapacitated outdoors. When traveling outdoors wear hats, scarves, gloves, layered clothing and keep fingertips, earlobes, and noses covered. 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
- Shallow breathing

If you see symptoms of hypothermia or frostbite, call 911 and follow instructions, or go to the emergency room.

“If you are attending the parade on Thursday, dress warmly. Wear hats, scarves, gloves, and layer up. Keep your fingertips, earlobes and noses covered,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “Listen to your body. If you’re at increased risk for injury or illness due to the extreme cold, significantly limit your time outdoors.”

“During this very cold weather, take care to bundle up warmly,” said **Acting Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. “If you spend time outside, stay alert for signs of hypothermia, like intense shivering or dizziness, and if you experience them, seek medical attention or call 911.”

Department of Sanitation

- The New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) is readying 695 salt spreaders across the five boroughs and will pre-salt elevated areas and overpasses ahead of potential snow.

Department of Social Services

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. During Code Blue Weather emergencies, experienced outreach teams work to connect homeless New Yorkers with the following resources:

- **Shelters:** During a Code Blue, shelter is available system-wide to accommodate anyone who is reasonably believed to be homeless and is brought to a shelter by outreach teams. Accommodations are also available for walk-ins.
- **Drop-in centers:** All drop-in centers are open 24-hours per day, including when Code Blue procedures are in effect, and will assist as many people as possible for the duration of the emergency. Drop-in staff and the dedicated outreach teams they work closely with each and every day can also make arrangements for homeless individuals at other citywide facilities.
- **Safe havens and stabilization beds:** Chronically homeless individuals may be transported directly to these low-threshold housing programs.
- **Street homeless outreach:** Teams will contact vulnerable individuals on their Code Blue Priority Lists a minimum of once every four (4) hours beginning at 8 p.m. during Code Blue Alerts and once every two (2) hours beginning at 8 p.m. for Enhanced Code Blue Alerts to encourage them to accept services, including transportation to a shelter placement. DSS coordinates borough-level Code Blue efforts directly with partner City agencies, including but not limited to NYPD, DSNY, and the Parks Department.

NYPD

- NYPD is standing up two coordination centers for 22 City, state, and federal agencies and partners to monitor Thursday's parade.
- NYPD, FDNY (Fire and EMS), NYC Emergency Management, DOT, DSNY, and the Mayor's Office of Citywide Event Coordination and Management (CECM) will deploy personnel and equipment along the parade route.

NYCHA

- NYCHA has increased its heating teams to 60 staff members per shift, with two shifts on Thanksgiving (8 a.m. to midnight). These teams will be borough-assigned to allow for more immediate response to localized needs. These teams can be deployed to assist across the city as needed.
- NYCHA is increasing third-party vendor coverage and response to heating plants.
- NYCHA development staff will routinely inspect heating plants on Thursday to proactively identify any issues.
- The Authority's Emergency Services Department will also provide 20-24 teams to respond to and support its heating teams across the city.
- NYCHA is increasing the number of skilled trade staff, such as plumbers and electricians, who will be ready to support and resolve technical service disruptions.
- NYCHA has increased staffing at the Customer Contact Center throughout the day (6 a.m. to midnight) to accommodate higher call volumes. NYCHA encourages residents to use the MyNYCHA app where possible given the expected increase in call volume.
- NYCHA is conducting robocalls to inform residents about the cold weather.

NYC Emergency Management

- NYC Emergency Management is working closely with the National Weather Service to monitor the cold weather.
- NYC Emergency Management continues to provide weather tips and updates to the public via Notify NYC, the agency's social media accounts, and the Advance Warning System (AWS). For the latest updates about Thursday's Thanksgiving Day parade, text THXGIVING18 to 692692.
- NYC Emergency Management is hosting daily conference calls with City and state agencies to coordinate the City's preparations for the cold weather.
- NYC Emergency Management continues to update elected officials with the latest information regarding the cold weather.

Department of Buildings

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, with forecasted wind gusts up to 35 miles per hour starting today, Wednesday, November 21 and continuing through the Thanksgiving holiday. 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. To safeguard construction sites, builders, contractors, and developers should take all precautionary measures including but not limited to the following:

- Tie down and secure material and loose debris at construction sites.
- Cover electrical equipment from exposure to the weather.
- Store loose tools, oil cans, and extra fuses in a toolbox.
- Secure netting, scaffolding, and sidewalk sheds.
- Suspend crane operations and secure crane equipment when wind speeds reach 30 mph or greater.
- Suspend hoist operations and secure exterior hoists when wind speeds reach 35 mph or greater, unless manufacturer specifications state otherwise.
- Brace and secure construction fences.
- Call 911 if there is an emergency on a construction site.

Buildings Bulletin 2015-029 outlines the requirements for vertical netting, debris netting and material-fall protection devices at buildings and construction sites. To view this bulletin, click [here](#).

To secure a building, property owners should take all precautionary measures including but not limited to the following:

- Bring inside loose, lightweight objects such as lawn furniture, potted plants, garbage cans, garden tools, and toys.
- Anchor objects that would be unsafe outside, such as gas grills or propane tanks.
- Close up and secure patio umbrellas.
- Secure retractable awnings.
- Remove aerial antennas and satellite television dishes.
- Pay attention to local weather forecasts and bulletins issued by the National Weather Service on local radio stations.
- Beware of falling branches if you are near trees.

Department of Parks and Recreation

- Following last Thursday's snow storm, the Parks Department deployed 30 crews of 150 workers to conduct tree repairs and removal. Parks has inspected every tree-related service request made through 311 after the storm. From those inspections, including hanging limbs, downed limbs and downed trees, Parks has completed nearly 80 percent of the related work to be done. All storm-related debris will be cleared citywide by Wednesday night.
- On Thursday, the Parks Department will deploy 10 workers along the parade route to conduct tree inspections.
- The Downed Tree task force will be on standby to deploy if necessary. Parks will monitor requests for down trees/limbs and deploy field staff conduct inspections if necessary.

Department for the Aging

During extreme cold, the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) works with home-delivered meal providers, case management agencies, senior centers, and others in its network to ensure that older adults are safe.

- Home-delivered meal providers deliver extra meals to homebound clients.
- Case management agencies contact vulnerable seniors to ensure that they are prepared for the storm.
- Local caregiver programs linked to DFTA's Caregiver Resource Center perform client wellness checks.

Senior centers may open or close on a case-by-case basis. Seniors should contact their local center before leaving the house.

Housing Preservation and Development

Residential building owners are legally required to maintain indoor temperatures at 68 degrees when the temperatures fall below 55 degrees outside during the day and a minimum of 62 degrees indoors overnight, 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 www.nyc.gov/311, or use the 311Mobile app (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.

Take measures to trap existing warm air and safely stay warm until heat returns, including:

- Insulate your home as much as possible. Hang blankets over windows and doorways and stay in a well-insulated room while the heat is out.
- Dress warmly. Wear hats, scarves, gloves, and layered clothing.
- If you have a well-maintained working fireplace and use it for heat and light, be sure to keep the damper open for ventilation. Never use a fireplace without a screen.
- If the cold persists and your heat is not restored call family, neighbors, or friends to see if you can stay with them.

- Do not use your oven or fuel-burning space heaters to heat your home. These can release carbon monoxide, a deadly gas that you cannot see or smell.
- Open your faucets to a steady drip so pipes do not freeze.

If You Need Emergency Heating Assistance

The Human Resources Administration (HRA) administers the federal Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), which can help low-income renters and homeowners with heating bills and other energy expenses. HEAP can help with:

- Regular heating bills from a variety of heat sources (even if heat is included in your rent or you live in subsidized housing).
- Emergency payments to keep you from losing your heat.
- Replacing damaged furnaces, boilers and heating units.

Eligibility for HEAP is based on your household income, family size, and energy costs. If you are homebound and need help with your heating bills, you can call the NYC Heat Line at 212-331-3150 to arrange a home visit. For more information, call 311.

Fire Safety

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.

- Make sure you have a working smoke/CO alarm in every room. Test them at least once a month and change the batteries twice a year.
- Use only portable heating equipment that is approved for indoor use. Space heaters are temporary heating devices and should only be used for a limited time each day.
- Keep combustible materials, including furniture, drapes, and carpeting at least three feet away from the heat source. Never drape clothes over a space heater to dry them.
- Never leave running space heaters unattended, especially around children. Always keep an eye on heating equipment. Turn it off when you are unable to closely monitor it.
- Plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord or power strip. Do not plug anything else into the same outlet when the space heater is in use. Do not use space heaters with frayed or damaged cords.
- If you are going to use an electric blanket, only use one that is less than 10 years old from the date of purchase. Also avoid tucking the electric blanket in at the sides of the bed. Only purchase blankets with an automatic safety shut-off.

Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Carbon monoxide comes from the burning of fuel. Therefore, make sure all fuel-burning devices such as, furnaces, boilers, hot water heaters, and clothes dryers are properly vented to the outdoors and operating properly. If you are not sure, contact a professional to inspect and make necessary repairs.

- Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide alarm. Most homes and residential buildings in New York City are required by law to have carbon monoxide detectors installed near all sleeping areas. Owners are responsible for installing approved carbon monoxide alarms. Occupants are responsible for keeping and maintaining the carbon monoxide alarms in good repair.
- Keep fireplace chimneys clean and clear of debris.
- Never heat your home with a gas stove or oven, charcoal barbecue grill, kerosene, propane, or oil-burning heaters. Kerosene heaters and propane space heaters are illegal in New York City.
- The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are non-specific and include headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, sleepiness, trouble breathing, and loss of consciousness. Severe poisonings may result in permanent injury or death.

If a carbon monoxide detector goes off in your home get outside immediately and call 911. If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, get outside immediately and call 911. For more fire safety information, visit FDNYsmart.org.

For more safety tips, visit NYC.gov/EmergencyManagement. New Yorkers are also encouraged to download the Notify NYC mobile application, which is available for free download from iTunes or Google Play. Notify NYC is the City's free emergency notification system. Through Notify NYC, New Yorkers can also receive phone calls, text messages, and/or email alerts about winter weather conditions and other emergencies. To learn more about the Notify NYC program or to sign up, visit NYC.gov/NotifyNYC or call 311. You can also follow @NotifyNYC on Twitter. For up-to-date parade tips, text *THXGIVING18* to 692692.