



Health and Human Services Department

Extreme Cold

The City of Evanston offers a variety of services to protect the public from extreme cold temperatures. Exposure to cold temperatures, whether indoor or outside, can be dangerous to anyone, but particularly the elderly, infants and young children, persons with disabilities and people on medication.

What constitutes extreme cold?

A cold emergency is in effect when the national weather service issues a wind-chill advisory. The criteria for a wind chill advisory is wind chill equivalent -30° Fahrenheit or colder.

Extreme cold may result in:

❄ **Hypothermia** - the most serious cold-related illness. Hypothermia is the result of prolonged exposure to cold. When a person experiences hypothermia, his body temperature is so low that it affects the brain, making the person unable to think clearly or move well. The warning signs for adults are shivering, exhaustion, confusing, fumbling of hands, memory loss, slurred speech and drowsiness. Warning signs for infants are bright red colored skin and very low energy.

▶ **What to do if you experience hypothermia:**

- If body temperature is below 95° Fahrenheit, seek medical attention immediately.
- If medical attention is not available, get to a warm room or shelter, remove any wet clothing, begin warming the body from the center of the body out, drink warm beverages and keep the body dry.

❄ **Frostbite** – a milder cold-related illness, is an injury to the body that is caused by freezing. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and color in affected areas, most often the face and extremities. Frostbite can severely damage the body and lead to amputation. The warning signs of frostbite are white or grayish-yellow skin areas, skin that feels unusually firm or waxy, and numbness.

▶ **What to do if you experience frostbite:**

- If you detect symptoms of frostbite, seek medical care.
- If medical attention is not available, and there no signs of hypothermia, get to a warm room or shelter, do not walk on frostbitten areas, immerse the affected area in warm (not hot) water, warm the affected area using body heat – but do not rub the area, and do not use a heating pad, lamp or other heat-producing electrical devices.



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How to prevent cold related illnesses:

- ✧ Have an emergency supply kit for both your home and car. In the kit include such items as blankets, matches, a standard first-aid kit, flashlight, battery-powered radio, battery-powered clock or watch, extra batteries, snow shovel, booster cables, mobile phone, compass, tool kit, tow rope, tire chains, and brightly colored cloth.
- ✧ Conserve heat within the home by avoiding extra ventilation;
- ✧ Monitor your body temperature;
- ✧ Keep a water supply;
- ✧ Eat and drink wisely by consuming well-balanced meals. Avoid alcoholic or caffeinated beverages;
- ✧ Dress warmly and stay dry;
- ✧ Avoid exertion;
- ✧ Understand wind-chill;
- ✧ Be cautious about travel;

The City of Evanston's respite service:

The Health and Human Services Department partners with a local cab company to provide free transportation to the Robert Crown Center, the City's official warming shelter. All cab fees are billed to the Department. Citizens must contact the Department to request transportation assistance.

If a cold emergency is in effect, and you would like to arrange for transportation to the City's official warming shelter:

- ✧ During business hours, please call the Health and Human Services Department, at (847) 866-2969.
- ✧ After business hours, please call the non-emergency line of the Evanston Police Department, at (847) 866-5000.