

## COLD WEATHER INCREASES THE RISK OF HYPOTHERMIA

A little care and prevention can help you avoid the increased risk of hypothermia and frostbite in cold temperatures.

- Keep warm and dry
- Stay inside as much as possible
- Eat a balanced diet
- Keep moving when outdoors

Known as the “Silent Killer,” hypothermia is also called “Exposure.” It normally occurs due to a combination of cold, wet and wind.

Factors that increase the risk of hypothermia include:

Poor physical condition due to lack of rest/sleep, exhaustion, illness, unbalance diet or the use of alcohol and drugs.

Symptoms of hypothermia include:

Intense shivering, muscle tension, fatigue and a feeling of cold or numbness.

Warning signs of advanced hypothermia include:

Stumbling, slurred speech, lethargic, erratic behavior, poor decision-making, irritability or absent-mindedness.

If any of these indicators are present, seek warmth. Move indoors, if possible.

**Do not** give a violently shivering person coffee, alcohol or other fluids. **Do not** allow the person to smoke or rush to move around.

## FROSTBITE

To prevent frostbite:

Keep exposed flesh covered, keep dry and limit your exposure as much as possible to the outdoors.

Frostbite comes on in three stages:

The affected body part becomes cold and stiff, the skin gets hard and turns blue or white, and then the affected area becomes numb and the feeling of pain or cold disappears.

Treatment of frostbite includes:

Warm the affected area without causing damage to the frozen tissue. **Do not** rub or massage the affected area. **Do not** place the affected area in HOT water, but rather in lukewarm water.



# FEMA Safety Tips for Occupants of Temporary Housing Units

During cold weather, residents of Temporary Housing Units (THUs) should observe the following Fire and Life Safety precautions:

## FIRE SAFETY

- Use only electric or battery-powered lights in your THU. Never use candles, lanterns or other open-flame devices.
- Check that the smoke detectors are in good working order and test them periodically. Remember to change the batteries at least once a year.
- Make sure all cooking and heating equipment is in good working condition. If it doesn't seem to be safe, then don't use it.
- Keep cooking and heating equipment away from paper, cardboard and other combustibles.



# FEMA

- Use only electric cooking appliances in the THU. Shut off all appliances before leaving.
- Propane may be used inside only if provided with the THU, such as on the stove and heater installed in the unit. Know where the shut-off valve is located and how to shut it off.
- Never use charcoal or propane grills inside or within 6 feet of the outside of the THU.
- Before going to bed, extinguish all smoking materials and then soak them in water. **DO NOT SMOKE IN BED!!!**
- Know where the fire extinguisher is located in the THU and learn how to use it.
- Determine a fire escape route and assembly area for your family, then discuss and practice your plan so that everyone knows it. Some units might be equipped with emergency window-opening devices. Learn how they operate before an emergency occurs.
- Make sure all gas connections and fume vents are properly maintained and not blocked or covered.
- Do not store gasoline or other flammable liquids in or under the THU.
- Do not store gasoline-powered vehicles (small scooters, mopeds, etc.) in or under the THU.
- Avoid using space heaters if at all possible. If using a portable heating device make sure that it is UL-rated and automatically shuts off if tipped over. Place it in an area free of combustible materials (drapes, bedding, and clothing).

### **REMEMBER YOUR PETS - Cold Weather Tips for your Companion**

The following guidelines will help you protect your companion animals when the mercury dips.

- If your dog spends a lot of time engaged in outdoor activities, increase its supply of food, particularly protein, to keep it and its fur in tiptop shape.
- Never let your dog off the leash on snow or ice because dogs can lose their scent and easily become lost. More dogs are lost during the winter than during any other season, so make sure yours always wears ID tags.
- Thoroughly wipe off your dog's legs and stomach when it comes in out of the sleet, snow or ice. The dog can ingest salt, antifreeze or other potentially dangerous chemicals while licking its paws; paw pads may also bleed from snow or encrusted ice.
- Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter, as a longer coat will provide more warmth. When you bathe your dog in the colder months, be sure to dry it completely before taking it outside. If you own a short-haired breed, consider getting your pet a sweater with a high collar or turtleneck with coverage from the base of the tail to the belly. For many dogs, this is regulation winter wear.
- Never leave your pet alone in a car during cold weather. A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the

cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.

- Puppies do not tolerate the cold as well as adult dogs and will need extra care.
- Keep your cat inside. Outdoors, felines can freeze, become lost, stolen, injured or killed.
- During the winter, outdoor cats sometimes sleep under the hoods of cars. When the motor is started, the cat can be injured or killed by the fan belt. If there are outdoor cats in your area, bang loudly on the car hood before starting the engine to give the cat a chance to escape.
- Like coolant, antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs and cats. Be sure to thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle. Visit the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center for more information.
- Make sure your companion animal has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts. A cozy dog or cat bed with a warm blanket or pillow is perfect.