

Governor Ted Strickland



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 2009

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**Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness Urges Ohioans to
Be Safe While Out in Frigid Temperatures**

Columbus, OH – With today's high in central Ohio expected to reach a mere 10 degrees and tonight's low, -6 degrees, the Ohio Department of Public Safety's Ohio EMA encourages everyone to listen to weather reports paying particular attention to wind chill temperatures, dress in layers before going outside, and take extra safety precautions if using alternate heat sources.

Frostbite can occur quickly when temperatures are below freezing. According to the National Weather Service, wind chill temperature is how cold people and animals feel when outside. Wind chill is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin, caused by wind and cold.

Frostbite is a cold-related injury that happens to the body when skin tissue freezes. Symptoms of frostbite include a loss of feeling in the extremities (fingers, toes, ear lobes, nose), and exposed skin will turn pale white or grey. If a person obtains hypothermia, medical attention is needed immediately. Warning signs of hypothermia include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. Body temperature with hypothermia is abnormally low – below 95 degrees F.

The risk of frostbite and hypothermia is increased in people with reduced blood circulation, the elderly, and people who are not dressed properly for extremely cold temperatures.

Tips for Dressing for Extremely Cold Weather

- Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Trapped air between the layers will insulate the body. Outer garments (coats, jackets) should be tightly woven, water repellent and hooded.
- Wear a hat. Forty percent of the body's heat can be lost from your head.
- Cover your mouth with a scarf or mask to protect your lungs from extremely cold air.
- Wearing mittens that are snug at the wrist is better than wearing gloves.
- Try to stay dry and out of the wind.

If children are outside playing in the snow, have them come in at least every 30 minutes to warm up. If shoveling snow or working in outdoor elements, take short breaks indoors. The body tires quicker in colder temperatures. Keep in mind that exhaustion can make the body more susceptible to cold injuries.

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"Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness"

www.weathersafety.ohio.gov

When preparing to drive in extreme winter conditions, take time to do the following:

- Pay attention to weather reports. Allow time in your schedule for bad weather and traffic delay. Have patience and “Take it Slow in Ice and Snow.”
- Try to keep at least a half tank of gas in your vehicle. A full tank of gas will prevent fuel line freeze-up and allow you to run the heater periodically, if stranded.
- Keep snow and ice cleared from your vehicle’s windows, mirrors, head lights, brake lights and license plates.
- Stay with your vehicle while it’s warming up. An unattended, running vehicle invites car theft.
- During winter travel, let people at your destination know your departure time, your driving route, your anticipated arrival time, and your cell phone number.

Prepare a winter emergency kit for your vehicles. Supplies should include:

- Snow brush with ice scraper
- Blankets or sleeping bag
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Booster (jumper) cables
- Emergency flares
- Bottled water or juice and high-energy snack foods
- Cell phone and car charger
- Sand or non-clumping cat litter to use for tire traction
- First-aid kit and necessary medications
- Tire repair kit and pump
- Extra winter clothing, boots, hats and mittens or gloves

For additional winter safety and preparedness information, visit the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness Web site at www.weathersafety.ohio.gov.