

Safety Tips to Protect Yourself During Extreme Cold

Central Racine County Health Department works to ensure the health and safety of all residents. During periods of extreme cold we advise residents to protect themselves and to also check on family, friends, and neighbors. Some safety tips for how to protect yourself and your family during extreme cold are listed below.

- **Stay inside.** It's the best place to be when temperatures are dangerously cold.
- **Stock a home emergency kit.** [Your home kit should include items such as food and water, cell phone and charger](#) (link is external), flashlight and batteries, first aid kit, important medications, a weather radio, and a change of clothes.
- **Dress in layers.** If you have to venture out, dress in several loose-fitting layers. Wear a hat, mittens, and snow boots. Use a scarf to cover your nose, mouth, and face.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of hypothermia.** Warning signs include shivering, exhaustion, confusion, and slurred speech. Call 911 if someone is exposed to cold temperatures and you see these symptoms.
- **Check on your friends, family, and neighbors.** The elderly, babies in cold bedrooms, people who are frequently outside (e.g., the homeless, hunters), and people who drink alcohol or use drugs are more likely to be harmed from the cold.
- **Make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors.** [All homes and duplexes in Wisconsin are required to have properly working detectors on every level](#), including the basement, but not the attic or storage areas. Detectors can be purchased at most hardware stores.
- **Never run a gasoline or propane heater or a grill (gas or charcoal) inside your home or garage.** Any heating system that burns fuel produces carbon monoxide. Use a battery-powered detector where you have fuel-burning devices but no electric outlets, such as in tents, cabins, and RVs.
- **Run generators at a safe distance (at least 20 feet) from the home.** Never run a generator in the home or garage, or right next to windows or doors, to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- **Winterize your car.** Just as you have a home emergency kit, you need one for your car too. Pack items such as blankets, snacks and water, a shovel, jumper cables, and sand. Keep your gas tank at least half-full.
- **Limit outdoor time for pets.** Extreme cold is dangerous for animals too.

Residents in need of shelter, heating assistance, or warm clothing can call 211 for resources available where they live.