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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Updated Information

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From: Chris Holman, Portage County Executive

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## **EXTREME COLD TEMPERATURES ON THE WAY**

*As temperatures drop, take steps to stay warm*

PORTAGE COUNTY, WI — Earlier today, Governor Evers declared a State of Emergency throughout the state of Wisconsin due to the extreme cold temperatures and wind chill that will be setting in this week. Though these will be historically cold temperatures, Portage County leadership does not anticipate closing county offices again this week. However, it is still of the utmost importance to stress the personal safety and well-being for county residents, county employees, and people across the region.

The extreme cold will continue to be problematic for road conditions, and the Highway Department will be monitoring those conditions closely. Due to the nature of this weather, the county doesn't anticipate having completely clear roads until later this week. Tonight and into tomorrow, winds will pick up again from the west and likely cause some snow to blow back across some roads. If you are traveling, keep an eye out for snow drifts, especially on secondary and tertiary routes.

Portage County Public Health and Emergency Management would also like to remind residents to take steps to be safe and stay warm.

In the 2017-2018 winter season, 38 people died from exposure to extreme cold. To protect yourself and your family during extreme cold, follow these safety tips:

- **Stay inside.** When possible, stay indoors. It only takes five minutes to experience frostbite in these extreme temperatures. We haven't seen this kind of cold since the mid-90s.
- **Stock a home emergency kit.** Your home kit should include items such as food and water, cell phone and charger, flashlight and batteries, first aid kit, important medications, a weather radio, and a change of clothes. Visit [readywisconsin.wi.gov/make-a-kit](http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/make-a-kit) for more items and tips.
- **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 mouth and face.
- **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. Visit [readywisconsin.wi.gov/make-a-kit](http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/make-a-kit) for more items and tips. Keep your gas tank at least half-full.
- **Check on your friends, family, and neighbors.** The elderly, babies in cold bedrooms, people who spend lots of time 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 for \$20-50.
- **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.
- **Limit outdoor time for pets.** Extreme cold is dangerous for animals too.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of hypothermia.** Warning signs include shivering, exhaustion, confusion, and slurred speech, and symptoms can look similar to intoxication. Call 911 if someone is exposed to cold temperatures and you see these symptoms.

While residents of Portage County are encouraged to stay out of the sub-zero weather, if homes are without heat there are several warming sites established throughout Portage County. The warming sites will be available during business hours as listed. If overnight accommodations are needed, residents are asked to contact Emergency Services at (715) 344-7438, or United Way's 211.

**Warming sites include:**

- Portage County Aging and Disability Resource Center located at 1519 Water Street, Stevens Point -- 715-346-1401; Hours: 7:30 AM – 4:30 PM (Monday through Friday)
- Portage County Health and Human Services located at 817 Whiting Avenue, Stevens Point -- 715-345-5350; Hours: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (M, W, and Th), 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM (T), and 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM (F)
- Portage County Public Library located at 1001 Main Street, Stevens Point 715-346-1544; Hours: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday through Saturday; 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Sunday (call first - may close early due to weather)
- Salvation Army located at 1600 Briggs Street, Stevens Point --715-341-2437; Hours: 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM—**Overnight accommodations are available at this site as well.**
- Stevens Point Recreation Center located at 2442 Sims Avenue, Stevens Point --715-346-1531; Hours 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM (Monday through Friday)
- Lettie Jensen Community Center located at 487 North Main Street, Amherst --715-498-5012; Hours: 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM (Monday - Thursday) 9:00 AM – Noon Fridays **Will be closed 1-30-19 (call first - may close early due to weather)**
- Rosholt Public Library located at 137 North Main Street, Rosholt --715-677-4510; Hours: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Village of Almond Municipal Center located at 122 Main Street, Almond -- 715-366-8171; Hours: 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM (Monday through Wednesday) **Open on 1-30 until 8:00 pm, and open 1-31 7:30 am – 4:30 pm**
- Village of Plover Municipal Center located at 2400 Post Road, Plover -- 715-345-5252; Hours: 7:30 AM – 4:30 PM (Monday through Friday)

Visit the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services website](#) for more information about staying safe during extreme cold. ###