



PORTAGE COUNTY
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Public Health

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Media Release

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EXTREME COLD TEMPERATURES ON THE WAY

As temperatures drop, take steps to stay warm

(December 11, 2019) PORTAGE COUNTY, WI — Dangerously low temperatures are forecasted for much of the state over coming weeks; Portage County Health and Human Services would like to remind residents to take steps to be safe and stay warm.

“Freezing temperatures, wind chills, and winter storms can cause hypothermia, frostbite, and even death,” said Gary Garske, Portage County Public Health Officer. “The best way to stay safe during extreme cold is to be prepared.”

To protect yourself and your family during extreme cold, follow these safety tips:

- **Stay inside.** When possible, stay indoors.
- **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 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 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 encourage 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, the Sheriff’s Office Dispatch at (715) 346-1400, or United Way’s 211.

Warming sites include:

- **Portage County Aging and Disability Resource Center** 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** at 817 Whiting Avenue, Stevens Point, 715-345-5350; Hours: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM (Monday, Thursday), 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM (Tuesday), 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Wednesday) and 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM (Friday)
- **Portage County Public Library** at 1001 Main Street, Stevens Point, 715-346-1544; Hours: 9:00 AM – 8:00 PM (Monday through Thursday); 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM (Friday), 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Saturday), and 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM (Sunday)
- **Salvation Army** at 1600 Briggs Street, Stevens Point, 715-341-2437; Hours: 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM (each day)
- **Stevens Point Recreation Center** at 2442 Sims Avenue, Stevens Point, 715-346-1531; Hours 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM (Monday through Friday)
- **Lettie Jensen Community Center** at 487 North Main Street, Amherst, 715-498-5012; Hours: 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM (Monday through Thursday), 9:00 AM to 12 PM (Friday)
- **Rosholt Public Library** at 137 North Main Street, Rosholt, 715-677-4510; Hours: 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday) 10:00 Am to 6PM (Wednesday)
- **Village of Almond Municipal Center** at 122 Main Street, Almond, 715-366-8171; Hours: 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM (Monday through Wednesday)
- **Village of Plover Municipal Center** 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.

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To promote the health, safety, and well-being of Portage County residents.