

Extreme Cold

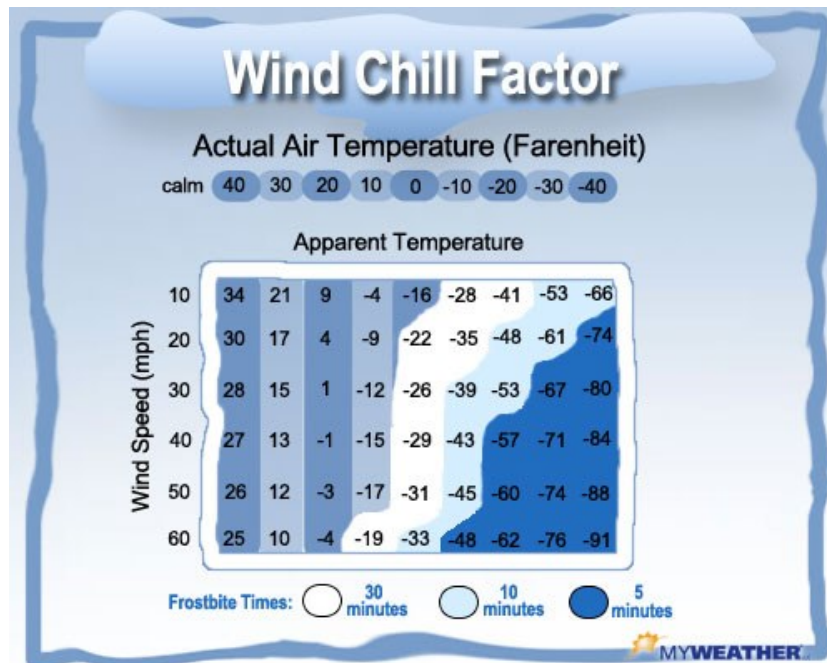
A Guide to Promote your Personal Health and Safety

When winter temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can become a challenge.

Exposure to cold temperatures, whether indoors or outside, can cause other serious or life-threatening health problems. **Infants** and the **elderly** are particularly at risk, but anyone can be affected.

Avoid Exertion

Cold weather puts an *extra* strain on the heart. If you have heart disease or high blood pressure, follow your doctor's advice about shoveling snow or performing other hard work in the cold. Remember, your body is already working hard just to stay warm, so don't overdo it.



Understanding Wind Chill

The Wind Chill index is the temperature your body feels when the air temperature is combined with the wind speed. It is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by the effects of wind and cold. When there are high winds, serious weather-related health problems are more likely. The Wind Chill Chart shows the difference between actual air temperature and perceived temperature, and amount of time until frostbite occurs.

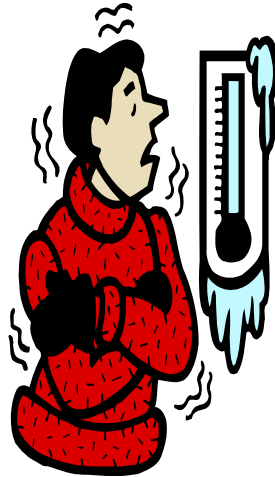
Hypothermia

When exposed to cold temperature, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold may result in hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature.

Recognizing signs of hypothermia:

shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, slurred speech, memory loss.

Take care: Move to a warm place, remove all wet clothing. Warm slowly beginning with the center of the body by wrapping in an electric blanket or multiple layers of blankets. Drink warm liquids, avoid alcohol and caffeinated beverages.



Frostbite

Frostbite is an injury to the body that is caused by freezing, and causes loss of feeling and color to the affected area. Areas most often affected are the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes.

Recognizing signs of frostbite: a white or grayish-yellow skin color, skin that feels unusually firm or waxy, numbness.

Take care: Seek Medical Care as soon as possible. Do not walk on frostbitten feet or toes-this increases the damage. Get into a warm room as soon as possible. Warm the affected area using body heat or warm (not hot) water. Do not rub or massage the frostbitten area. Do not use a heating pad, heat lamp, or the heat of a stove, fireplace or radiator. Affected areas are numb and can be easily burned.

Cool Tips to Stay Warm

Keep warm by wearing wool, silk, or polypropylene inner layers-these fabrics hold in more heat than cotton. The outer layer of clothing should be tightly woven and wind resistant. Wear a hat to keep your head warm, 40 % of heat loss escapes from an unprotected head.

Be prepared! Plan ahead!

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