City of Joliet Winter Weather Preparedness Reminder
For Residents

The City of Joliet reminds residents to educate themselves on how to remain safe during winter weather events. “We encourage Joliet residents to remember their neighbors who may require special assistance, especially the elderly.” Emergency Management Director Greg Sebben said. He added, “it’s important to have a plan and to prepare survival kits for both the home and the vehicle.” The City of Joliet offers the following tips to stay safe during this extremely cold weather:

- **For the home:** Create a winter survival kit, including a cell phone, flashlight, portable radio, first aid kit, any necessary medications, and a supply of food and water in case the power goes out. Keep fire extinguishers on hand and make sure your family knows how to use them. Add extra insulation to walls, attics, doors, and windows. Have safe emergency heating equipment available. Try to stay indoors and, if you must venture out, dress warmly. Be sure not to overexert yourself or work outside for extended periods of time. Check on neighbors and family members to make sure they are safe and be sure to have working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detectors in your homes.

- **For the vehicle:** Create a winter survival kit, including a cell phone and charger, blankets, extra clothing and winter gear, jumper cables, flashlight and extra batteries, high calorie-nonperishable food, and matches or a lighter. Make sure your vehicle is in good operating condition before using it in extreme cold, keep your fuel tank full, and, while operating, try to conserve fuel. Bring a sand bag or ice melt to improve traction if needed. Tell someone about your travel plans or proposed route. Plan the trip carefully and, if extreme cold, snowy, or icy conditions exceed your ability or your vehicles ability, do not travel. If you must, be cautious. Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed space or partially enclosed area like a garage.

With more arctic weather forecasted for Illinois, it is important to recognize the signs of hypothermia and frostbite, how to treat these conditions, and what you can do to avoid them. Everyone should take precautions against hypothermia, but infants and the elderly are particularly at risk and should be monitored closely. Infants lose body heat more quickly than adults, and the elderly often make less body heat because of a slower metabolism and less physical activity. The Illinois Department of Public Health recommends setting the thermostat above 65 and checking on elderly friends and neighbors frequently to ensure their homes are adequately heated.

- **Signs of Hypothermia:**
  - Forgetfulness
  - Drowsiness
  - Slurred speech
  - Change in appearance, such as a puffy face
  - Weak pulse
  - Slow heartbeat
  - Very slow, shallow breathing
If you notice these symptoms, take the person’s temperature. If it is 95 degrees or below, call a doctor or ambulance, or take the victim directly to a hospital. A drop in temperature below 90 degrees can create a life-threatening situation. To prevent further heat loss, wrap the person in a warm blanket. You can also apply a hot water bottle or electric heating pad (on a low setting) to the person’s abdomen. If the person is alert, give small quantities of warm food or drink. **DO NOT** give a hypothermia victim a hot shower or bath. It could cause shock. Do not try to treat hypothermia at home. The condition should be treated in a hospital.

- **Frostbite**: Is caused by bitterly cold temperatures and typically affects exposed areas of the face (cheeks, nose, chin, and forehead), the ears, wrists, hands and feet. Frostbitten skin is whitish and stiff, and the area will feel numb rather than painful. If you notice these signs, take immediate action. To treat frostbite, warm the affected part of the body gradually. Wrap the frostbitten area in blankets, sweaters, coats, etc. If no warm wrappings are available, place frostbitten hands under your armpits or use your body to cover the affected area and seek medical attention immediately. **DO NOT** rub frostbitten areas. The friction can damage the tissue.

Please visit [www.ready.illinois.gov/during/winterstorms.htm](http://www.ready.illinois.gov/during/winterstorms.htm) or [www.crh.noaa.gov/lot/?n=winter](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/lot/?n=winter) for additional information on Winter Storm Preparedness.

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