

NEWS RELEASE

December 15, 2008

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Residents urged to take cold weather precautions

Richland, Wash.: The National Weather Service is forecasting temperatures to remain well below freezing for the coming week. Benton County Emergency Services (BCES) reminds residents of the real dangers that come with such severe weather conditions.

A temperature of 5° F, combined with a 10-mile-per-hour wind can bring the wind chill factor down to 10 degrees below zero. The wind chill temperature is a measure of how the cold actually feels on your skin. Temperatures and wind chills this low cross the line from merely discomfort to potentially life threatening.

BCES strongly urges people to be alert and aware of these dangerous conditions and take the following precautions:

- Limit your outdoor exposure as much as possible.
- Monitor your food intake and physical output and maintain a regular diet to help your body better handle the severe weather conditions.
- Hydrate - Drinks with caffeine, sugar and alcohol take longer for your body to absorb and do not hydrate as well. Water is usually the best choice.
- People should be aware of the amount and intensity of their physical activity, both indoors and out. Avoid overexertion. Cold weather puts additional strain on the body, especially the heart.
- If you have to go outside, wear appropriate clothing that will adequately insulate you from the cold and provide protection from the wind. Make sure to cover your head, ears, nose, and hands.
- Older adults, those in fragile health and smaller children can be more readily affected by the cold than the average adult.
- Check on loved ones and neighbors, especially those in fragile health.
- Never leave children or pets alone in vehicles. Temperatures in vehicles can drop rapidly. (Continued on page 2)

- Pets can be greatly affected by the cold and should not be exposed longer than they have to be.
- Large animals need to be kept out of the wind and have a dry place to lie down. Water supplies should be checked to avoid freezing.
- Check heating units. Poorly operating or damaged heating units can release carbon monoxide gas. Test carbon monoxide detectors for proper operation and battery life. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas that kills more than 500 Americans every year. Never use generators, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline or charcoal-burning devices inside your home, basement, and garage or near a window. Also, make sure you have installed a carbon monoxide detector in your home to alert you and your family to this “silent killer.”

Additional information is available on the Internet at www.bces.wa.gov.

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