



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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CDPH Reminds Californians to Stay Safe, Healthy During Severe Cold Weather

SACRAMENTO – With weather forecasts calling for nighttime temperatures to drop near freezing in parts of California, Dr. Ron Chapman, director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and state public health officer, today urged Californians to protect themselves and their families from the hazards of extreme cold.

“Cold temperatures threaten individuals, their pets and their homes,” Chapman said. “Exposure to severe cold temperatures can cause hypothermia and other serious health problems. Those at greatest risk are people who work outside, seniors, infants and people with chronic conditions.”

The warning signs of hypothermia are shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech and drowsiness. For infants, the warning signs are bright red, cold skin and very low energy. If you notice any of these signs, take the person’s temperature. If it is below 95 degrees, seek medical attention immediately and get the individual to a warm room or shelter.

Chapman recommends dressing warmly, eating well-balanced meals, and avoiding alcoholic or caffeinated beverages, as they cause the body to lose heat rapidly. Because cold weather puts an extra strain on the heart, he cautioned people with heart disease or high blood pressure to avoid overexerting themselves outside.

Chapman said it is important to plan ahead for possible power outages by keeping several days’ supply of food, water and medicine at home. Bring pets indoors or provide adequate shelter to keep them warm. Use space heaters and fireplaces appropriately to avoid household fires and the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Visit [CDPH’s Be Prepared California website](http://www.cdph.ca.gov) for additional safety tips and information.

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