

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: December 9, 2016

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

David L. Maack, CEM, CPM, WCEM
Racine County Emergency Management

Winter Weather On Its Way

The National Weather Service is projecting 5"-9" of snow will fall in southeastern Wisconsin this weekend. A long duration of light to moderate snow is expected. In addition, arctic air will grip the area next week. The Racine County Office of Emergency Management would like to remind Racine County residents to plan accordingly.

"Plan ahead and slow down," urged County Executive Jonathan Delagrave. "If you need to be outdoors, please take some extra precautions to stay safe during this time."

Put an emergency kit in the truck of your car. An emergency kit should include blankets, a shovel, flashlight with extra batteries, battery powered radio, snack food including energy bars, raisins and mini candy bars, matches and small candles, first aid kit with pocket knife, road salt, sand, or cat litter for traction, booster cables, emergency flares and reflectors, and a fluorescent distress flag and whistle to attract attention.

"Winter storms are considered deceptive killers," commented David Maack, Racine County Emergency Management Coordinator, "Most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. People die in car accidents on icy roads, from overexertion while shoveling and hypothermia from extreme cold."

Winter storms can last a few hours or extend for days. Heavy snow, drifting snow and whiteout conditions are all hazards associated with winter storms, as well as extreme cold, freezing rains and strong winds. In addition, winter storms can knock out heat, power, cable and phone services.

"Our crews and equipment are ready to go but please give them the room they need to do their jobs," commented Julie Anderson, Racine County Director of Public Works and Development Services, "Avoid unnecessary travel. If you must be out, slow down and stay at least 200 feet away from snowplows."

In addition to the forecasted snow, frigid weather will impact Racine County next week. Low temperatures, coupled with even moderate wind, can make common outdoor activities life threatening, even for those appropriately dressed for the outdoors. Exposed areas such as the nose and ears can freeze within 30 seconds with a wind chill factor of negative 30 degrees."

Half of all cold related injuries and deaths occur among healthy, adequately clothed individuals involved in outdoors sports. Especially hazardous are open areas such as lakes and fields, where winds can build.



It is important to dress for the weather. Wear loose, lightweight, warm clothes in layers. Trapped air insulates. You can also remove layers to avoid perspiration and subsequent chill. Outer garments should be tightly woven, water repellent, and hooded. Wear a hat because half your body heat loss can be from the head. Don't forget to cover your mouth to protect your lungs from extreme cold. Mittens, snug at the wrist, are better than gloves.

Finally, take it easy. Cold weather puts an added strain on the heart. Unaccustomed exercise such as shoveling snow or pushing a car can bring on a heart attack or make an existing medical condition worse. If you experience problems, seek medical care immediately.

In the event you or someone else is adversely affected by the cold, warm the core first (trunk, abdomen), not the extremities (hands, feet). Warming extremities first could cause shock, or drive cold blood towards the heart, causing heart failure. Do not warm the person too quickly, such as immersing him or her in warm water, as this could lead to dangerous heart arrhythmias. In the event of hypothermia and/or frostbite, seek medical care.

You can find more information and tips on being ready for winter weather and extreme cold temperatures at readyracineco.com.

-end-

