



BE PREPARED AND SAFE DURING EXTREME COLD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 7, 2015

LANSING. With arctic temperatures expected to impact the entire state until later this week, the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD) is encouraging Michigan citizens and visitors to be extra cautious when going out in the extreme cold.

"As we saw last winter, these arctic blasts can create hazardous situations," said Capt. Chris A. Kelenske, Deputy State Director of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and commander of the MSP/EMHSD. "Citizens are encouraged to monitor local weather reports and follow the appropriate steps to stay safe during these extremely cold and potentially life-threatening temperatures."

The National Weather Service is forecasting statewide wind chills to periodically dip down to 20 degrees below zero or lower through at least Thursday, Jan. 8. Exposure to these temperatures could potentially cause frostbite and hypothermia, as well as create hazardous driving conditions.

To stay safe during cold weather:

- Stay indoors if possible. If you must go outside, wear protective gear—such as hats, mittens and gloves—in addition to a warm coat. Always protect your lungs with a scarf.
- Watch for signs of frostbite, which include loss of feeling or pale appearance of fingers, toes or face.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia, which include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, drowsiness and exhaustion.
- Understand the hazards of wind chill. As wind speed increases, heat is carried away from a person's body more rapidly and could lead to severe hypothermia.
- Remove clothing if it gets damp or wet. Wet clothing can make you more prone to hypothermia.
- Weather-proof doors and windows to trap heat inside your home.
- Check heating units. Poorly operating or damaged heating units can release carbon monoxide gas. Test carbon monoxide detectors for proper operation and battery life.
- Check on family, friends and neighbors who are at risk and may need additional assistance.
- Watch pets closely and keep them indoors when possible. Animals can suffer from hypothermia, frostbite and other cold weather injuries.
- Check and restock your emergency preparedness kit. If you don't have a kit, make one.

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- Minimize travel. If travel is necessary, keep a full tank of gas and an emergency preparedness kit in your vehicle. Put warm clothing—such as gloves, blankets and hats—in your kit in case you become stranded.

Michigan weather is unpredictable any time of year, but especially during the winter months. If you are stranded, do not leave your vehicle. Stay with the vehicle and wait for help.

Travelers are encouraged to go to www.michigan.gov/roadconditions and www.michigan.gov/drive to check road conditions before traveling. Road conditions are also available by calling the MSP Travel Hotline at 1-800-381-8477. The MSP/EMHSD asks that you view these websites or call the Travel Hotline rather than calling your local MSP post or 911.

Citizens who need assistance or guidance during the extreme cold are encouraged to call 211.

For more information about being prepared before, during and after an emergency or disaster, go to the MSP/EMHSD's emergency preparedness website at www.michigan.gov/beprepared or Twitter page at www.twitter.com/MichEMHS.

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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