

Winter in the City of St. Louis

Staying Safe During Cold Weather



Provided by the City of St. Louis Department of Health

The Honorable Lyda Krewson, Mayor
Fredrick L. Echols, MD, Director of Health

Cold Weather Safety Tips

- **Dress for the conditions when outdoors.**
 - **Wear layers of lightweight, warm clothing.**
 - **Since most body heat is lost through your head, wear a hat.**
 - **Mittens keep hands warmer than gloves with fingers.**
 - **Wear waterproof, insulated boots.**
 - **Cover your face and mouth with a scarf or knit mask.**
 - **Cover exposed skin to prevent frostbite.**
- **Stay dry. Wet clothing chills the body rapidly. Change out of wet clothing as soon as possible.**
- **Alcoholic beverages cause your body to lose heat more rapidly. Instead, drink hot chocolate, tea, coffee, or soup to help maintain your body temperature.**
- **Be careful when using fireplaces, stoves, or space heaters. Proper ventilation is essential. Keep flammable material away from space heaters and do not overload electric circuits.**

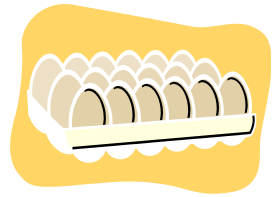
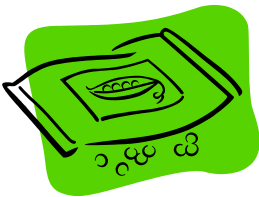
- **Know the signs of hypothermia: shivering, confusion, exhaustion, fumbling hands, slurred speech, drowsiness, and/or clumsy gait.**
- **Know the signs of frostbite: white or grayish-yellow skin areas, skin that feels unusually firm or waxy, and/or initially tingling then numbness.**
- **Be cautious when shoveling snow. It is extremely hard work and puts a strain on your heart because your body is already working hard just to keep warm. Heart attacks resulting from shoveling snow is a major cause of death after winter storms.**
- **Limit outdoor playtime for children to prevent frostbite or hypothermia.**
- **Do not leave children or pets unattended in cars or other vehicles.**

Plan for Cold Weather

- **Make a plan.** Include ways to contact one another and check on family, friends, neighbors, and others who live alone.
- **Prepare an emergency kit.** Include water, a battery-powered radio, non-perishable foods, and first aid supplies.
- **Listen for information.** Stay updated with what to do and where to go during a cold weather emergency.

Food Safety after Power Outages

- **Never taste food to determine if it's safe—
When in doubt, throw it out!**



- **Use thermometers to check food temperatures. Throw away perishable foods (i.e., meats, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, and leftovers) that have been above 40°F for more than 2 hours.**
- **Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for up to 4 hours, and a full, unopened freezer can keep food cold up to 24 hours.**

--When Power Returns--

- **Clean and sanitize refrigerators and freezers (1 capful of bleach to 1 gallon of water) before restocking.**
- **Make sure refrigerators are 41°F or below and freezers are 0°F or below before restocking with food.**
- **If frozen foods have thawed but are still below 41°F, or still have ice crystals, you can re-freeze the food.**

**For more information, contact
Environmental Health--Food Services at
612-5300**

Winter Safety for Pets

Remember to keep your pets safe and healthy during cold weather!

- Do not leave your pets outdoors unattended when the temperature gets below freezing (32°F). Frostbite is a threat to animals exposed to harsh, cold weather.
- Keep your pets away from antifreeze and promptly clean up any spills from your car. Antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs and cats, even in tiny doses. Unfortunately, animals are attracted to its sweet taste.
- Keep your cat inside. Cats left outdoors may crawl into a warm car engine for shelter and can be seriously injured or killed when the car is started. Check under the hood before starting your car in the winter to chase away any hidden cat or other wildlife.
- Wipe off your pet's paws, legs, and stomach after being out in the snow or ice. Any salt or other de-icing chemicals that are swallowed by licking can make your pet sick.

- **Never leave a cat or dog alone in a car during cold weather. The car holds in the cold like a refrigerator, and your pet can freeze to death.**
- **If your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness, or breed type (small or short-haired), take her outdoors only long enough to relieve herself.**
- **Never let your dog off-leash in snow or ice, especially during a snowstorm. Dogs often lose their scent in snow and ice and can easily become lost**



Contact the City of St. Louis Department of Health:

- **Animal Control matters at (314) 657-1500**
- **Food Services matters at (314) 612-5300**
- **All other public health matters at (314) 612-5100**

If you require any reasonable modifications or auxiliary aids and services for effective communication because of a disability, call [\(314\) 657-1480](tel:3146571480) or email health@stlouis-mo.gov 48 hours in advance.

Other Resources and Information

Food stamps and replacements 1-800-392-1261
WIC supplemental feeding 1-800-835-5465
Homebound senior meals 314-612-5918
Housing Resource Center 314-802-5444
Citizens' Service Bureau 314-622-4800

(City services or complaints, etc.)

Heat-Up St. Louis.....HeatUpStLouis.org
or 314-657-1599

(Utility assistance/budget billing)

St. Louis United Way Referral Hotline 2-1-1
From a cell phone, 1-800-427-4626

(Heating centers and other cold-related problems)

National Weather Service – St. Louis office
<http://www.weather.gov/lxs>

Severe Weather Public Health Protection

<https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/health/severe-weather.cfm>

