



Boston EMS

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Cold Weather Safety Tips

Do

- **DO layer clothing.** Use things like thermal underwear, undershirts, track suits, sweaters, snowsuits, boots, hats, gloves, and scarves. Hats are important – 40% of body heat can be lost when the head is uncovered!
- **DO cover exposed skin.** In extreme cold, frostbite can happen in under a minute. Wind only makes the risk greater – make sure to cover all exposed skin.
- **DO keep moving.** Your body generates its own heat when you engage in physical activity. Moving will help keep you warm.
- **DO check on elderly family and neighbors.** The elderly are particularly susceptible to cold-related illness. Ensure elderly family and neighbors have adequate heat and nutritious food.
- **DO avoid getting wet.** Moisture can speed the onset of hypothermia and can be very dangerous. If you expect to get wet, keep a dry set of clothing nearby – especially a hat, gloves, socks, and boots.
- **DO drink non-caffeinated fluids.** Dehydration occurs more quickly in cold, dry weather. Be sure to keep yourself well hydrated, especially if you are exerting yourself.
- **DO keep pets indoors.** Pets suffer in the cold just like humans, yet they have little means to protect themselves. Help your pets stay warm by keeping them indoors!

Don't

- **DON'T drink alcohol.** Alcohol can speed the onset and worsen the effects of hypothermia.
- **DON'T overexert yourself.** Cold weather can exacerbate underlying respiratory illness. Be careful about exerting yourself in extreme cold.
- **DON'T stay out in the cold.** If you have to stay out in the cold for work, be sure to take frequent breaks where it is warm.

Remember

- Look for signs of hypothermia, including confusion, inappropriate behavior, extreme weakness or lethargy.
- Look for signs of frostbite, including pale and waxy skin. Affected areas feel cold, hard, and solid to the touch.

If you or anyone you know exhibits these symptoms, get in touch with a healthcare provider immediately. If the symptoms are severe don't hesitate to call 9-1-1.