STAYING SAFE IN COLD WEATHER

Cold weather often presents new hazards including slips and falls on icy walkways, carbon monoxide, and hypothermia and frostbite when outdoors.

**Hypothermia:**
When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up your body’s stored energy. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. A body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well. This makes hypothermia particularly dangerous because a person may not know it is happening and will not be able to do anything about it.

**Symptoms:**
Symptoms of hypothermia can vary depending on how long you have been exposed to the cold temperatures.

- **Early Symptoms:**
  - Shivering
  - Fatigue
  - Loss of coordination
  - Confusion and disorientation

- **Late Symptoms:**
  - No shivering
  - Blue skin
  - Dilated pupils
  - Slowed pulse and breathing
  - Loss of consciousness

**First Aid:**
Take the following steps to treat someone with hypothermia:

- Request medical assistance.
- Move the victims into a warm room or shelter and call (336) 841-9111.
- Remove their wet clothing.
- Warm the center of their body first—chest, neck, head and groin.
- Warm beverages may help increase the body temperature. Do not try to give beverages to an unconscious person.
- After their body temperature has increased keep the victim dry and wrapped in a warm blanket, including the head and neck.
- If victim has no pulse, begin CPR.

**Frostbite:**
Frostbite is an injury to the body that is cause by freezing. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and color in the affected areas. It most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers or toes. Frostbite can permanently damage body tissues, and severe cases can lead to amputation. In extremely cold temperatures, the risk of frostbite is increased, particularly for those who are not dressed properly.

**Symptoms:**
Symptoms of frostbite include:

- Reduced blood flow to hands and feet
- Numbness
- Tingling or stinging
- Aching
- Bluish or pail, waxy skin

**First Aid:**
Individuals suffering from frostbite should:

- Get into a warm room as soon as possible.
- Unless absolutely necessary, do not walk on frostbitten feet or toes.
- Immerse the affected area in warm—not hot-water (the temperature should be comfortable to the touch for unaffected parts of the body).
- Warm the affected area using body heat.
- Do not rub or massage the frostbitten area; doing so may cause more damage.
- Do not use a heating pad, heat lamp, or the heat of a stove, fireplace, or radiator for warming. Affected areas are numb and can easily be burned.