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NEWS

City of St. Louis Department of Health



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Extreme Cold Temperatures Alert

The City of St. Louis Department of Health is urging residents to prepare for an extended period of extreme cold temperatures. St. Louis is expecting severe cold weather beginning today and running through the weekend. Temperature highs will reach the upper 20s with lows falling to below zero.

Extreme low temperatures can be dangerous to people, and residents should avoid exposure to low temperatures for extended periods of time, especially at-risk populations, such as the elderly, those with functional needs, people with pre-existing health conditions, and small children.

The Health Department is advising residents to remember the following tips to staying safe in extreme cold temperatures:

- Dress in layers, both inside and outside
- Wear a hat and gloves, and try to have as little exposed skin as possible
- Know the signs of hypothermia and frostbite
- Use caution when walking outdoors to avoid slipping on snow and ice
- Keep homes at a minimum of 60 degrees
- Avoid using alternative heating sources because of risk of fire and carbon monoxide
- Be sure to check on elderly neighbors, or anyone else you know who may be in need of assistance

Heat-Up St. Louis is helping area seniors and the disabled with their winter heating bills, they and qualified area low-income households should call [314-241-7668](tel:314-241-7668), or log onto www.heatupstlouis.org.

For information on warming sites, you can contact United Way Greater St. Louis Information Referral line at [1-800-427-4626](tel:1-800-427-4626) or dial 2-1-1.

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City of St. Louis Animal Care and Control (ACC) also urges residents to consider the safety of pets during cold weather. Extreme low temperatures are also dangerous to companion animals, such as dogs and cats, and pets should not be exposed to extreme low temperatures for extended periods of time.

If kept outdoors, animals are required to have access adequate shelter, food and water. ACC encourages citizens to be especially mindful of their pet's water source, as water will freeze in these temperatures. Sufficient shelter is defined as a cover or protection from the elements containing adequate and appropriate bedding such as straw, hay, or wood shavings, which is small enough to allow the dog or cat to retain its body heat but is large enough to allow the animal to stand, turn around, and lie down.

Failure to provide proper shelter and care for companion animals in extreme temperatures could be prosecuted as cruelty to animals. Animal Care and Control Officers will be patrolling to ensure the safety of companion animals.

Through the "Free Straw for Warm Paws" program, Operation SPOT has made free straw available for pick up at the ACC shelter between 8:00am-5:00pm seven days a week, located at 2801 Clark Ave., St. Louis, MO 63103. This straw can be used as bedding for dog houses and other companion animal shelters. Dog houses may be available upon request.

If an animal appears to be in distress or is unresponsive, please contact ACC immediately at [314-657-1500](tel:314-657-1500). If calling after hours, please call 911.

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