



External Affairs
Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency

Press Release

Extreme Cold Temperatures Expected to Impact Rhode Island; Warming Centers to Open Throughout State for Those in Need

Cranston, RI - The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) is currently monitoring the risk for very cold temperatures expected to impact Southern New England this weekend. Rhode Islanders are urged to prepare now as arctic air will overspread Rhode Island beginning Saturday, February 13, into Sunday, February 14.

According to the National Weather Service, confidence is high for temperatures to fall into the teens and single numbers beginning Saturday afternoon. Temperatures are then expected to fall below zero degrees Fahrenheit throughout Rhode Island Saturday night, then recover into the single numbers and teens on Sunday.

"We are expecting dangerously cold temperatures this weekend," said Governor Gina Raimondo. "My number one priority as Governor is your safety, and the best way to stay safe this weekend is by limiting yourself to the extreme cold by staying indoors as much as possible. I also ask that you please check on neighbors and loved ones and make sure they have everything they need to stay safe and warm."

Wind chills will play a major factor, as they could drop temperatures as low as -20 degrees Saturday night into Sunday morning due to gusty northwest winds.

"We could potentially see record low temperatures for Rhode Island this weekend," said Peter Gaynor, Director of the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency. "Therefore, if you must venture outside, dress for the conditions by covering yourself up as much as possible. Wear proper hats and gloves, cover your face and neck, and dress in warm layers. Additionally, make sure that you have sufficient heating fuel for the next few days. If you experience a loss of your heating source and need emergency heating, contact your local municipalities or dial 2-1-1."

Due to the forecasted extreme cold, several communities will have warming centers open to the public for those who need to seek temporary shelter. To view the up-to-date list of warming centers, their locations, and their hours of operation visit www.riema.ri.gov/warmingcenters.

RIEMA reminds everyone of the following tips to stay safe during extreme cold:

- The temperature inside your home should be set according to your own activity level, health, and medications. What is an acceptable, fuel-saving temperature for an active family may not be safe for an older person who has difficulty moving or takes certain medications.
- The elderly are especially susceptible to extremely cold temperatures. Check on elderly friends, family, or neighbors frequently.
- Insulate water pipes to keep them from freezing.
- Keep a blanket and/or hats and gloves in your vehicle in the event you are stranded and without heat.
- Remove clothing if it gets damp or wet. Wet clothing can make you more prone to hypothermia.
- Know the signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Symptoms of frostbite can include loss of feeling and loss of color and usually happens on the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers or toes. Symptoms of hypothermia in adults can include shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, drowsiness, or slurred speech. In infants, symptoms of hypothermia can include bright red, cold skin and low energy.
- Remember: Pets get cold too! If it is too cold for you to be outside, it's too cold for your pet as well. Do not leave cats/dogs outside for prolonged periods of time.

It is also important to remember that house fires occur more frequently in the winter due to a lack of proper safety precautions when using alternate heating sources, such as unattended fires and space heaters. To prevent a dangerous fire from occurring this winter, consider the following precautionary tips:

- Place space heaters at least three feet away from anything combustible (i.e. wallpaper, bedding, clothing, etc.)
- Never leave space heaters operating when you are not in the room or when you go to bed. Do not leave children unattended near space heaters.
- Refrain from drying wet clothing over a space heater.
- Make sure smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are working properly and replace batteries as necessary.
- Use a fireplace screen when burning fires and burn only wood. NEVER burn paper or plastic.

For more information and for tips on preparing for the extreme cold follow RIEMA on Twitter or visit the RIEMA website at www.riema.ri.gov.