

## EXTREME COLD WEATHER HEALTH UNIT RESPONSE PLAN

Type	Threshold	Key Public Health Messages	Key Response Actions
<b>ROUTINE</b>	Seasonal Winter Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay Warm, Stay Dry</li> <li>Avoid lengthy and strenuous outdoor activity</li> <li>Help others - check on the elderly or people with disabilities who live alone</li> <li>Know the signs of cold injuries and know what to do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health information posted on LGL Health Unit website.</li> <li>Send “Dealing with cold weather” media release</li> <li>Updated information is sent directly to community partner agencies.</li> </ul>
<b>COLD ALERT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A daily predicted temperature of -15°C or lower (without wind chill)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take action to avoid injuries from the cold:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cover unprotected skin, dress in layers and wear an outer layer that is wind resistant</li> <li>Avoid prolonged outdoor exposure.</li> <li>Avoid rapid body cooling after sweating when outdoors</li> <li>Drink warm fluids (no alcohol or caffeine)</li> <li>Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia</li> </ul> </li> <li>Check on the elderly or people with disabilities who live alone</li> <li>Maintain a minimum indoor temperature of 20°C</li> </ol>	<p>LGL Health Unit will issue a <b>cold weather health alert</b> directly to community partner agencies.</p> <p>This group includes municipalities, schools, daycares, acute care facilities, long term care homes, neighbourhood associations and emergency service providers.</p> <p>A “Cold Alert” media release will be sent out.</p>
<b>COLD WARNING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A daily predicted temperature of -25°C or lower</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environment Canada forecasts a wind chill of -28 or colder</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environment Canada issues a severe winter storm warning</li> </ul>	<p><i>Specific messaging as needed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Temperature - 25°C or Wind Chill is -28 or colder:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children indoors<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Check ears, nose, cheeks, chin, fingers and toes often for signs of frostbite                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unprotected skin can freeze in as little as 10-30 minutes.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> <li><b>Wind Chill - 40 or colder:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check ears, nose, cheeks, chin, fingers and toes often for signs of frostbite                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unprotected skin can freeze in as little as 5 minutes.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>Serious risk of hypothermia if cold, or cold and wet, and outdoors for long periods</li> <li>Consider cancelling outdoor activities</li> <li>Check frequently on vulnerable populations</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p>LGL Health Unit will issue a “<b>cold weather health warning</b>” directly to community partner agencies and via media release.</p> <p>This information will be posted on the LGL Health Unit website. Partner radio stations will be alerted to play a taped message from the MOH.</p>
<b>COLD EMERGENCY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extreme wind chill of -55 or colder</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cold weather health warning issued</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of a contributing factor such as power outage, or critical infrastructure failure</li> </ul>	<p><i>Core cold weather messages plus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Danger!</li> <li>⇒ Outdoor conditions are hazardous<sup>2</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay indoors</li> </ul> </li> <li>⇒ Ensure vulnerable individuals are in a warm, safe environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LGL Health Unit will issue a <b>cold weather health emergency</b> to community partner agencies and media.</li> <li>Possible activation in whole or in part of LGL Health Unit’s Emergency Plan</li> <li>Possible activation of emergency municipal control groups and plans</li> <li>Inform provincial health officials</li> <li>Post information on LGL website</li> <li>Advise all community partner agencies and media when emergency status is lifted</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> 2007 Canadian Paediatric Society. Frostbite Fact Sheet. [www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)

<sup>2</sup> 2010 Environment Canada. Wind Chill Hazards and what to do. <http://www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&n=5FBF816A-1#table1>

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