

EXTREME COLD WEATHER HEALTH UNIT RESPONSE PLAN

Type	Threshold	Key Public Health Messages	Key Response Actions
ROUTINE	Seasonal Winter Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay Warm, Stay Dry • Avoid lengthy and strenuous outdoor activity • Help others - check on the elderly or people with disabilities who live alone • Know the signs of cold injuries and know what to do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health information posted on LGL Health Unit website. • Send “Dealing with cold weather” media release • Updated information is sent directly to community partner agencies.
COLD ALERT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A daily predicted temperature of -15°C or lower (without wind chill) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take action to avoid injuries from the cold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover unprotected skin, dress in layers and wear an outer layer that is wind resistant • Avoid prolonged outdoor exposure. • Avoid rapid body cooling after sweating when outdoors • Drink warm fluids (no alcohol or caffeine) • Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia 2. Check on the elderly or people with disabilities who live alone 3. Maintain a minimum indoor temperature of 20°C 	<p>LGL Health Unit will issue a cold weather health alert 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>
COLD WARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A daily predicted temperature of -25°C or lower <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Canada forecasts a wind chill of -28 or colder <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Canada issues a severe winter storm warning 	<p><i>Specific messaging as needed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature - 25°C or Wind Chill is -28 or colder: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children indoors¹ 2. Check ears, nose, cheeks, chin, fingers and toes often for signs of frostbite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unprotected skin can freeze in as little as 10-30 minutes.² • Wind Chill - 40 or colder: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check ears, nose, cheeks, chin, fingers and toes often for signs of frostbite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unprotected skin can freeze in as little as 5 minutes.² 2. Serious risk of hypothermia if cold, or cold and wet, and outdoors for long periods 3. Consider cancelling outdoor activities 4. Check frequently on vulnerable populations 	<p>LGL Health Unit will issue a “cold weather health warning” 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>
COLD EMERGENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme wind chill of -55 or colder <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold weather health warning issued <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of a contributing factor such as power outage, or critical infrastructure failure 	<p><i>Core cold weather messages plus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Danger! ⇒ Outdoor conditions are hazardous² <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stay indoors ⇒ Ensure vulnerable individuals are in a warm, safe environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGL Health Unit will issue a cold weather health emergency to community partner agencies and media. • Possible activation in whole or in part of LGL Health Unit’s Emergency Plan • Possible activation of emergency municipal control groups and plans • Inform provincial health officials • Post information on LGL website • Advise all community partner agencies and media when emergency status is lifted

¹ 2007 Canadian Paediatric Society. Frostbite Fact Sheet. www.caringforkids.cps.ca

² 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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