



For Immediate Release
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Cold weather tips issued from Stanislaus County

Stanislaus County, CA – The National Weather Service has projected cold weather to continue in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services is advising residents to prepare themselves, their families and their animals for the inclement weather.

“We’re asking people to check on friends, relatives and neighbors who might be more vulnerable to the cold weather,” stated Gary Hinshaw, assistant director of the Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services.

During cold weather, seniors, small children and persons with underlying medical conditions can be more vulnerable to risk of exposure to the cold. “We need people to realize that exposure to extreme cold can be dangerous and that they should use precautions and common sense,” said John Walker, public health officer for Stanislaus County.

In Stanislaus County, officials are asking for donations of clean blankets to help the American Red Cross. The local Red Cross is nearly out of blankets and anyone able to donate blankets can take them to a city fire station to be transported to the Red Cross.

The Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services is monitoring the situation and coordinating with local cities and community service agencies to prepare for contingencies, if needed. The American Red Cross is on standby if warming shelters need to be opened, and individual cities are preparing to respond to the needs of their residents in coordination with emergency services.

The county’s Public Health Department has established a telephone hotline with cold weather tips at (209) 558-8035.

Information on how to prepare for the cold weather is also available at www.stanemergency.com

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COLD WEATHER TIPS

The State Office of Emergency Services offers many helpful tips on preparing for the cold weather:

1) Preparing your home and family

- * Review and update your family emergency plan.
- * Replenish your emergency supply kits including battery-operated radio and flashlights.
- * Have extra blankets on hand.
- * Have a plan for meeting the needs of infants, children, seniors and those with disabilities.
- * Winterize your house, barn, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment. Clear rain gutters; repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.
- * Move family pets indoors or to an enclosure out of the elements. Likewise protect livestock or other large animals from the cold weather.
- * Move plants indoors or cover with blankets or plastic to prevent freezing.
- * Maintain a sufficient supply of heating fuel.
- * Insulate pipes and allow faucets to drip during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- * Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk, as people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.
- * Do NOT bring heating devices into the home that are intended for outdoor use, such as barbecues and other cooking equipment or other fuel burning devices. These items can produce deadly carbon monoxide.
- * Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).
- * Hire a contractor to check the structural ability of the roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow - or water, if drains on flat roofs do not work.

2) Dressing for the Weather

- * Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.
- * Wear mittens, which are warmer than gloves.
- * Wear a hat.
- * Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.

3) Traveling with caution

- * Have your car winterized and make sure it is working properly.
- * Install good winter tires. Make sure the tires have adequate tread.
- * Augment your car's emergency supply kit with a shovel, windshield scraper and blankets.
- * Maintain at least a half tank of gas during the winter season.
- * Check road conditions before departing.

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- * Let others know of your route and your estimated time of arrival.
- 4) Recognizing symptoms of exposure
 - * Confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and shivering are signs of hypothermia. Possibly: if you experience any of these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.
 - * Gray, white or yellow skin discoloration, numbness or waxy skin are symptoms of frostbite. If you experience any of these symptoms, seek immediate medical attention.
 - * In the case of overexposure to freezing temperatures, remove wet clothing and immediately warm the body with a blanket or warm fluids like hot cider or soup. Avoid caffeine or alcohol.

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See attachment following for location of shelters in Stanislaus County

**Stanislaus County
Cold Weather
Open Shelter List
January 11, 2007**

City of Modesto

Shelter

320 9th Street (Corner of "D")

Open: 12:00 p.m. (Noon) to 8:00 a.m.

Sally's Place / Salvation Army

625 "I" Street (Corner of 7th)

Open: 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

City of Turlock

Shelter

400 "B" Street

Open: 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Salvation Army – Warming Center (Open through Monday 1/15)

893 Lander Avenue

Open: 24 hours / no sleeping accommodations

City of Oakdale

Contact Dispatch at 847-2231 for assistance