



# Health and Welfare Alert

## Staying Safe during Winter Weather

### Winter Weather Considerations

Providers of people with disabilities need to follow winter safety precautions to ensure people can manage seasonal challenges, such as travel and dangerous temperatures.

Be aware that steps, sidewalks, and streets can be slippery from ice, even if it's not visible, which can increase the risk of falling. Avoid walking on frozen waterways; don't assume the ice is safe. Being outside for too long in extreme cold can also pose health threats, such as frostbite or hypothermia. Make a plan so the person can successfully avoid extreme temperatures, such as when waiting for a bus.

### Frostbite and Hypothermia

Frostbite is when the skin freezes. It often affects fingers, toes, and exposed skin, like the face, nose, and ears. Signs can include gray, white, or yellow skin; skin that looks waxy; or numbness.

#### Frostbite Treatment

Call 9-1-1. Don't rub person's frostbitten skin. Warm area slowly, but don't use heating pads.

Hypothermia is when the body loses too much heat and can't work properly. Signs can be cold feet and hands, pale skin, severe shivering, slurred speech, dizziness, trouble staying balanced, or a slow pulse.

#### Hypothermia Treatment

Call 9-1-1. Remove any wet clothing. Don't use direct heat to warm person. Don't rub or massage person.



### Outside Safety Tips

**Take extra clothing, blankets, and warm liquids on outings**

**Remember hats, gloves, scarves, heavy coats, sturdy shoes**

**Pay attention to icy walks to prevent falls**

### Heater Safety

Be alert when using space heaters. Heaters that are not working properly or get knocked over can cause fire and death. December, January, and February are leading months for home heating fires.



### Fast Facts

**40%** The amount of the body's heat lost if a person's head is not covered