



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mayor Burchett: Check on elderly, homebound during extreme weather

County offers additional safety tips during winter weather; highway crews hit the roads

Knoxville, Tenn. — Temperatures in the teens and single digits are forecast for the next few days, and Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett is urging citizens to take time to check on homebound seniors and anyone who may not be able to easily care for themselves.

“Too many seniors are homebound and have no one to care for them,” said Mayor Burchett. “With the extremely low temperatures expected this week, I hope neighbors, friends and relatives will take time to check on the elderly and others who may be homebound and in need of help.”

In addition to the elderly, other at-risk populations include young children, anyone with an altered mental status or mental illness, those who remain outdoors for extended periods of time and pets.

Anyone finding themselves in an emergency situation should call 9-1-1 immediately.

Highway Crews treating the roads

Knox County Highway crews hit the roads earlier today with thousands of gallons of salt brine. Crews have been working all afternoon spreading the brine across the county’s seven highway maintenance districts.

Later tonight and ahead of the forecasted snow, crews will begin spreading granulated road salt to help further prevent ice and snow accumulation on roadways maintained by Knox County.

Tips from the Knox County Health Department and the Knox County Fire Prevention Bureau:

Quick Tips

- Check on elderly neighbors, friends and relatives – make sure they have adequate heating, food, clothing and necessary medications.
- If using space heaters, make sure to follow the instructions properly and keep them away from any flammable materials.
- Check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and test all devices to ensure they are working properly.
- Never leave candles, fireplaces or other open flames unattended.
- Bring pets indoors, if possible. Otherwise, ensure adequate shelter and bedding to keep them dry and warm.
- Avoid going outdoors. However, if you must go outside, dress warmly in layers to limit exposure to the cold.

Hypothermia

- Results from exposure to cool or cold temperatures and the loss of body heat faster than the body can warm
- Signs of hypothermia:
 - o Adults: shivering/exhaustion, confusion/fumbling hands, memory loss/slurred speech and drowsiness
 - o Infants: bright red, cold skin and very low energy

Frostbite:

- Results from exposed skin becoming so cold it freezes
- Signs of frostbite:
 - o Early on - red painful skin
 - o Later - yellow or pale skin
 - o Skin feels waxy, firm and numb
- Can result in loss of the affected digit

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

- Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if inhaled.
- The most common symptoms are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain and confusion.
- Alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating, cooling or cooking can cause CO to build up in a home or garage and poison the people and animals inside.
- CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by small gasoline engines, stoves, generators, lanterns and gas ranges or by burning charcoal and wood.

If CO poisoning, frostbite or hypothermia are suspected, consult a health care professional right away.

CO Poisoning Prevention:

- Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- Never run a motor vehicle, generator or any gasoline-powered engine outside an open window, door or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.
- Never run a generator or any gasoline-powered engine indoors, even if the doors or windows are open (including garage, basement or attic).

Fire Prevention

- Keep any portable/space heaters at least three feet from anything combustible, and follow manufacturer's instructions.
- If using a fireplace to heat your home, be sure to follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Dispose of any fireplace ashes in a metal container with a lid that can be secured from the top. Store the container at least 10 feet from any structures, as ashes can maintain their heat for several days.
- Never leave a fire burning in a fireplace while you are sleeping.
- Never plug a generator into an outlet in your home, there is a danger of shock and electrocution.
- Be careful not to overload extension cords, doing so increases the risk of electrical fire.

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