

Extreme Cold Temperatures 2023

The National Weather Service is warning of extreme cold. A Wind Chill Watch is in effect through Saturday evening. Wind chill values could reach as low as 30 to 45 degrees (F) below zero.

The Vermont Agency of Human Services, community organizations and municipalities are working to expand daytime and overnight shelter options for people experiencing homelessness during the coldest hours this weekend. Vermonters in need of heating assistance or shelter can call 2-1-1. A list of shelters will be updated at: <https://vem.vermont.gov/news/shelters>

The Vermont State Police will also provide 'freeze patrols' during which troopers will patrol the state's two interstate highways during the overnight hours, when troopers typically are off duty. The purpose of the patrol is to look for and assist stranded motorists.

Excessive exposure can lead to frostbite, which is damaging to body tissue that is frozen. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and a pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes or the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, seek medical help immediately. Slowly warm the affected areas as you await medical assistance.

Hypothermia can occur in extreme cases. **The warning signs are uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion. If the person's temperature drops below 95 degrees, seek immediate medical care.**

If medical assistance is not available, slowly warm up the person, body core first, wrapping them in a blanket or using your own body heat. Do not warm the extremities first, for this drives the cold blood towards the heart and can lead to heart failure. Do not give the person alcohol, coffee, tea, or any hot food or beverage. Warm liquids are best.

If you lose your heat, seal off unused rooms by stuffing towels in the cracks under the doors. At night, cover windows with extra blankets or sheets. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat.

Vermonters can take additional steps to support their family, pets, and neighbors safe during cold weather, including:

- **Be a good neighbor.** Check with older Vermonters or others who may need assistance to ensure they have heat and are safe.
- **Limit outdoor activities during the coldest hours.** Also, consider your pets and limit their time outdoors.
- **Ensure you have sufficient heating "fuel"** (including wood). If you lose heat, use only safe alternate heating sources like a fireplace, wood stove, or space heater and take the necessary safety precautions. Test smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors and ensure heat sources are venting properly.
- **Keep blankets in your vehicle** in the event you are stranded by a breakdown or minor accident and must wait for help. Ensure your vehicle has sufficient fuel and other fluids, good tire pressure, and the battery is in good condition.
- **Dress in several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing**, rather than a single layer of heavy clothing. Outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent. Wear a hat, mittens, and sturdy waterproof boots, protecting your extremities. Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.

For weather, road, or emergency updates sent directly to your e-mail or cell phone sign up for Vermont Alert at <http://www.vtalert.gov>.

Forecast information: www.weather.gov/btv or www.weather.gov/aly.

Vermont Department of Health Winter Weather Safety (includes translated materials): healthvermont.gov/winter-weather

