STATE OFFICIALS URGE FLORIDA RESIDENTS TO PREPARE FOR COLD WEATHER

TALLAHASSEE - State officials are urging Floridians to prepare for colder temperatures beginning today. Canadian air is moving into the state this afternoon bringing with it freezing temperatures (32 degrees and below) and low wind chills.

“A widespread freeze is forecast for north Florida, with low wind chills expected for much of the state,” said Meteorologist Ben Nelson with the Florida Division of Emergency Management. “Residents and visitors to Florida should practice the "Five P's" of Cold Weather Safety.”

Wind chill is a measure of how cold air “feels” to your body when the wind is taken into consideration. The faster the wind blows, the greater body heat that is lost, and the colder it “feels”. That is why the “5 P’s” are especially important during this projected cold spell.

The “5 P’s” are: Protecting People, Protecting Plants, Protecting Pets, Protect Exposed Pipes, and Practice Fire Safety.

What Actions Should You Take To Be Prepared?

- Stay indoors and use safe heating sources.
- Be aware of the fire danger from space heaters and candles; keep such devices away from all flammable materials such as curtains and furniture.
- Do not use charcoal or other fuel-burning devices, such as grills that produce carbon monoxide indoors. Install at least one smoke and carbon monoxide detector per floor in your home.
- When Outdoors, stay dry and in wind protected areas.
- Wear multiple layers of loose-fitting, warm clothing.
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids and eat high-caloric foods.

In addition, the Florida Department of Health urges Floridians to care for the most vulnerable to cold weather, children and the elderly. DOH officials suggest checking on loved ones and elderly neighbors to ensure they have adequate and safe heating sources and supplies, and ensuring children are dressed properly for extreme cold temperatures.

“Florida’s children and elderly are extremely vulnerable to cold weather conditions,” said DOH Secretary John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A. “We can best protect them by taking a few minutes to check in and to make sure they are prepared to weather the elements.”

For more information concerning cold weather preparedness, please visit the Florida Division of Emergency Management website at: www.FloridaDisaster.org The Florida Department of Health Website is: www.doh.state.fl.us

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