

# Outside Winter Safety

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When the weather is extremely cold, and especially if there are high winds, try to stay indoors. Make any trips outside as brief as possible, and remember these tips to protect your health and safety.

## Dress Warmly and Stay Dry

Adults and children should wear:

- **a hat**
- **a scarf or knit mask** to cover face and mouth
- **sleeves** that are snug at the wrist
- **mittens** (they are warmer than gloves)
- **water-resistant coat and shoes**
- **several layers of loose-fitting clothing**

Be sure the outer layer of your clothing is tightly woven, preferably wind resistant, to reduce body-heat loss caused by wind. Wool, silk, or polypropylene inner layers of clothing will hold more body heat than cotton. Stay dry -- wet clothing chills the body rapidly. Excess perspiration will increase heat loss, so remove extra layers of clothing whenever you feel too warm. Also, avoid getting gasoline or alcohol on your skin while de-icing and fueling your car or using a snow blower. These materials in contact with the skin greatly increase heat loss from the body. Do not ignore shivering. It's an important first sign that the body is losing heat. Persistent shivering is a signal to return indoors.

## Avoid Exertion

Cold weather puts an extra strain on the heart. If you have heart disease or high blood pressure, follow your doctor's advice about shoveling snow or performing other hard work in the cold. Otherwise, if you have to do heavy outdoor chores, dress warmly and work slowly. Remember, your body is already working hard just to stay warm, so don't overdo it.

## Understand Wind Chill

As the speed of the wind increases, it can carry heat away from your body much more quickly. When there are high winds, serious weather-related health problems are more likely, even when temperatures are only cool.

## Wind Chill Factor

Wind speed (mph)	Actual air temperature °F													
	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	
	Apparent temperature °F													
4	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	
5	37	32	27	22	16	11	6	1	-5	-10	-15	-20	-26	
10	28	22	16	10	4	-3	-9	-15	-21	-27	-33	-40	-46	
20	18	11	4	-3	-10	-18	-25	-32	-39	-46	-53	-60	-67	
30	13	5	-2	-10	-18	-25	-33	-41	-48	-56	-64	-71	-79	
40	10	2	-6	-14	-22	-29	-37	-45	-53	-61	-69	-77	-85	
50	9	1	-7	-15	-23	-31	-39	-47	-55	-63	-71	-79	-87	

### Avoid Ice

Walking on ice is extremely dangerous. Many cold-weather injuries result from falls on ice-covered sidewalks, steps, driveways, and porches. Keep your steps and walkways as free of ice as possible using rock salt or another chemical de-icing compound. Sand may also be used on walkways to reduce the risk of slipping.

### Be Safe During Recreation

If you are hiking, camping, or skiing during cold weather, avoid becoming overtired. Be prepared to take emergency shelter, and carry waterproof matches and paraffin fire starters with you. Carefully watch for signs of cold-weather health problems.

For additional information, contact your local Outreach and Extension Center or the MU Extension Rural Safety and Health Program, 1.800.995.8503.

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