

# Crime Prevention News

To Enhance the Safety of Faculty, Staff and Students

December 2007

## Winter Weather Awareness

Nearly every year episodes of extremely cold air accompany winter storms or are left in their wakes. When an arctic outbreak is accompanied by strong winds, bitterly cold wind chills can result. Prolonged exposure to the cold can cause frostbite or hypothermia and can become life threatening. These are the two dangers during cold spells – **Frostbite and Hypothermia**.

Frostbite is damage to body tissues caused by that tissue being frozen. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes or the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected get medical help immediately. If help is not available slowly rewarm affected areas. However, if signs of hypothermia are present warm the body core before the extremities.

Hypothermia is having a low body temperature. Warning signs include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. To detect hypothermia take the person's temperature. If it is below 95 degrees immediately seek medical care, If medical care is not available begin warming the body slowly. Warm the core first. If needed use your own body heat to help. Get the person into dry clothing and wrap him/her in a warm blanket covering the head and neck. Do not warm the extremities first. This drives the cold blood toward the heart and can lead to heart failure.

The National Weather Service changed the wind-chill formula and wind-chill advisory and warning criteria in 2000. The latest advances in science, technology and computer modeling have resulted in a significantly improved wind-chill index. The new index provides a more accurate, understandable and useful formula for calculating the potential danger from the combination of wind and cold temperatures.

A wind chill advisory is issued when the wind-chill temperature is between 20 and 30 degrees below zero. A wind-chill warning is issued when the wind-chill temperature is more than 30 degrees below zero.

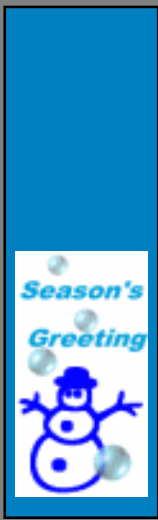


A **Winter Storm Warning** is issued when a combination of heavy snow, freezing rain, sleet or heavy winter precipitation is expected to combine with strong winds and/or very cold wind chill temperatures. **Winter Storm Warnings** are issued when the event is very likely or imminent from zero to 36 hours in advance.

**Winter Storm Watch** alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, freezing rain, sleet or that a combination of elements are possible from 12 to 48 hours in advance. A winter storm watch doesn't mean that the event is imminent.

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**Hazardous Weather Outlook** describes all potential weather risks including winter storms and periods of extreme cold through seven days. The outlook is designed to provide an early heads up to a potential storm or other hazard. The outlook is issued by the National Weather Service each morning by 6 am and updated as needed.

**Blizzard Warnings** are issued for sustained winds or frequent gusts 35 mph or greater, considerable falling and/or blowing snow with visibility less than ¼ mile with these conditions persisting for at least 3 hours.

**Ice Storm Warning** means that heavy ice may accumulate and measure one quarter inch or more in 12 hours or less.

**Heavy Sleet Warning** warns of an accumulation of one half inch or more of sleet.

**Heavy Snow Warning** warns of heavy snow of 6 inches or more in 12 hours or 8 inches or more in 24 hours with winds of less than 15 mph.

**Winter Weather Advisories** are issued when snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, sleet or a combination of elements is imminent or occurring but does not reach warning criteria. Advisories are issued for events which cause significant inconvenience and are moderately dangerous. If a single element is expected the NWS advisory will be issued as a single element advisory such as snow, freezing rain or snow and blowing snow.

**Wind Chill Warning** will be issued when wind chill temperatures are forecast to be between 20 and 30 degrees below zero.

**Dense Fog Advisory** would be issued when fog will reduce wide spread visibilities to less than a quarter mile.

**Freezing Fog Advisories** are issued for very light ice accumulation from freezing fog.

**Blizzard** – combination of winds over 35 mph, blowing or falling snow reducing visibilities to a quarter mile or less for 3 hours or more.

**Heavy Snow** – six inches or more in 12 hours or less or 8 inches or more in 24 hours or less.

**Freezing Rain** – rain that falls onto a surface, such as trees, cars and roads, with temperatures below freezing and forming a coating of glaze or ice. Even very small accumulations of ice can cause a significant hazard.

**Sleet** – rain drops then freezes into ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet usually bounces when hitting a surface and does not stick to objects however, it can accumulate like snow creating a hazard.

**Blowing Snow** – wind driven snow that reduces visibility and causes significant drifting. Blowing snow may be snow that is falling and/or loose snow on the ground picked up by the wind.

**Snow Showers** – light snow falling at varying intensities for brief periods of time. Some accumulations are possible.

**Snow Flurries** – light snow falling for short durations. No accumulation to a light dusting is all that can be expected.

Continued on page 3.



### Accessing Weather Watches and Warnings

There are ways that people can obtain weather information. You can tune into your favorite radio or television station, listen to your NOAA weather radio or check the internet.

NOAA weather radio broadcasts national hazard information 24 hours a day. Most weather radios are equipped with a special alarm tone feature that can give you immediate information about life-threatening situations. During an emergency routine weather programming will be interrupted by a special tone which activates weather radios in the listening area. In addition to severe weather NOAA weather radio will broadcast emergency information concerning other hazards from emergency officials.

Who should you own a weather radio?

Experts agree weather radios should be in every home. They are especially valuable in places that are entrusted with public safety such as hospitals, schools, places of worship, nursing homes, and numerous other locations where there are a large number of people.

In 2004, Johnson County Emergency Management received a grant and gave away more than 300 weather radios to schools, nursing homes, and public buildings including many of the United Way agencies.

Where can weather radios be purchased? Check with stores that sell electronics, or call the National Weather Service office in the Quad Cities at 1-563-391-7094 or check the NOAA Weather Radio Web Site at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr>.

NOAA weather radios are not just for emergencies. It is a round-the-clock source of weather reports and information to help you prepare for the day ahead. Programming includes regional weather synopsis, regional current conditions, local forecasts and climate reports.

Currently there are 25 NOAA weather radio stations in Iowa serving more than 95 % of Iowa. A few more weather radio stations are planned in the near future to close the coverage gaps and to provide coverage to all 99 Iowa counties. The NOAA weather radio station nearest to Iowa City is the Cedar Rapids station, WXL61 located at 162.475 MHz.

Over the past few years the internet has become a major dissemination vehicle for the National Weather Service. In fact, it has become the best way to graphically view national weather service forecasts. The National Weather Service web site is: [www.crh.noaa.gov/dmx](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/dmx) (all lower case letters).

To obtain road condition reports dial 511 or 1-800-288-1047 inside Iowa and 1-515 288-1047 if calling from outside Iowa.

Continued on page 4.



## Winter Safety in the Car and Home

### In the car...

Every winter people are trapped in their cars during winter storms. Being stranded in open country is a real hazard in Iowa and can be a life-or-death situation. The best way to survive being stranded in a car during a winter storm is to be prepared.

**Make sure your car or truck has been winterized and is mechanically sound.** Remember to make a winter survival kit. It should contain blankets/sleeping bags, flashlights, a first aid kit, a knife, high calorie and non-perishable food, extra clothing, a large empty can with a plastic lid, tissues for sanitary purposes, a smaller can and waterproof matches to melt snow for drinking water, a sack of sand, a snow shovel, a window scraper/brush, a tool kit, a tow rope, booster cables, a water container and a compass and road map.

**Be sure to listen to the latest forecast before traveling in the winter.** If a winter storm is imminent or occurring postpone your trip, if possible.

If you must travel during a winter storm carry a winter weather survival kit, keep your car's gas tank full, let someone know your route, destination and expected arrival time and carry a fully charged cellular phone.

If you become stranded in open country use the following safety tips:

**Stay in your car or truck.** Disorientation occurs quickly in wind-driven snow and cold. Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat. Open the window a little for fresh air to avoid carbon-monoxide poisoning. Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.

**Make yourself visible to rescuers.** Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine. Tie a colored cloth (preferably red) to your antenna or door. Raise the hood indicating trouble after the snow stops falling.

**Exercise from time to time** by vigorously moving arms, legs, fingers and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.



Continued on Page 5



### At home:

Like car safety during winter storms home safety starts with preparedness. In the home primary concerns are the potential loss of heat, power, and telephone service and the shortage of supplies if storm conditions continue for than a day.

Have the following items available:

1. A flashlight with extra batteries
2. A battery-powered NOAA weather radio and a portable radio to receive emergency information. These may be your only links to the outside.
3. Extra food and water, high energy food such as dried fruit or candy and food requiring no cooking or refrigeration are best.
4. Extra medicine
5. Extra baby items
6. First Aid supplies
7. Heating fuel because fuel carriers may not be able to reach you for days after a severe winter storm.
8. An emergency heating source such as a fireplace, wood stove and/or space heater. Learn to use the heating source properly to prevent a fire and have adequate ventilation to avoid carbon-monoxide poisoning.
9. A fire extinguisher, smoke detector and carbon-monoxide detector and be sure that they have been tested regularly and have fresh batteries or charges.

If you are caught at home during a winter storm try to do the following:

1. Stay inside.
2. If no heat is available close off unneeded rooms, stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors and cover windows at night.
3. Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration.
4. Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiring and subsequent chilling.

### Source:

Johnson County Emergency Management, Iowa Homeland Security, and Iowa Emergency Management Division ;11/04/2004

**Announcement:** Applications are available now for the **11th. Annual Citizen's Police Academy**. The goal of the Citizen's Police Academy (C.P.A.) is to promote a better relationship between law enforcement and the community it serves. This 9 week program will meet once per week on Wednesday nights from 6:30-9:30 at the University of Iowa Police Department. The C.P.A. will cover nearly every aspect of law enforcement. For more information you may contact any of the following participating agencies or pick up an application at any of their offices in December. The CPA will start on January 16th.2008 and ends on March 12th. 2008. **Facilitated by: The University of Iowa Police, Iowa City Police, Coralville Police and the Johnson County Sherriff's Office.**