



[www.bransonmo.gov](http://www.bransonmo.gov)

**City of Branson**  
110 West Maddux  
Branson, MO 65616  
417-337-8526  
Public Information Department  
[jadams@bransonmo.gov](mailto:jadams@bransonmo.gov)

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**Date: November 18, 2009**

**Contact: Ted Martin, Division Chief 337-8580 or [tmartin@bransonmo.gov](mailto:tmartin@bransonmo.gov)**

### **Winter Weather Awareness Day... Be Prepared – Be Informed!**

The National Weather Service and state and local emergency management agencies including the Branson Fire Department are encouraging citizens to begin getting ready for winter snow and freezing temperatures.

“Winter storms in the Ozarks may range from a deep freeze, icing conditions with freezing rain, moderate snow over a few hours, to blizzard conditions. The aftermath of any of these may impact our community for days or even weeks,” said Carl Sparks, Branson Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director.

Sparks urges residents to become familiar with terms commonly used by the National Weather Service. A **Winter Storm Watch** indicates that severe winter weather may affect the area. A **Winter Storm Warning** indicates severe weather conditions are definitely on the way and to take precautions. Add to this the term **Ice Storm Warning** issued when ice accumulations of a quarter-inch or more may be expected.

Be prepared at home with a radio and fresh batteries, rock salt to melt snow on sidewalks or driveways, securing an alternate fuel source, insulating attics and installing storm windows, and winterizing the family car.

Sparks also said it’s a good idea to keep a winter car kit in the trunk including a blanket, hat and gloves, flashlight, booster cables, and a first aid kit. If using fossil fuels such as propane, natural gas, or kerosene for example, firefighters remind you to have a carbon monoxide detector in the home. It’s a good idea to test your smoke alarms each month.

During severe winter weather, keep informed for fast breaking weather information provided by local media. One key tool to use to get immediate weather information as well as winter weather watches and warnings is to purchase an **All Hazard Risk Radio** commonly known as a severe weather alert radio. These units, if purchased with the Specific Area Message Encoding (S.A.M.E.) may be programmed to alert for key weather information in your specific county.

During a cold snap, frostbite and hypothermia become a major health concern for everyone, especially small children and the elderly.

“We encourage people to wear several layers of loose-fitting, light weight warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing,” said Division Chief Ted Martin. “Most importantly, wear gloves or mittens along with a hat. Both will prevent body heat loss in two areas of the body that lose heat most rapidly.”

It's easy to overexert in cold weather, especially when doing activities such as snow shoveling. The cold taxes everyone's body so it makes it even a higher priority to check on elderly neighbors and small children to watch for signs of frostbite or hypothermia.

Frostbite is a severe reaction to cold exposure that can permanently damage its victims. Symptoms include a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in fingers, toes, nose or earlobes. Hypothermia is a condition when the body's core temperature is less than 35 degrees centigrade. Some symptoms include uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory loss, stumbling, drowsiness and exhaustion.

If you suspect either frostbite or hypothermia, call for emergency medical services and start warming the victim before help arrives. Warm the person's trunk first with blankets or your own body. Arms and legs should be warmed last since stimulation of these extremities can drive affected blood to the heart and lead to heart failure. Never give a frostbite or hypothermia victim something with caffeine or alcohol. Caffeine makes the heart beat faster and will hasten the effects of the cold on the body. Alcohol can slow the heart and hasten the ill effects of cold body temperature.

If you must drive in a storm, allow more time to get to your destination. Wear a seatbelt and operate the vehicle with headlights on. Let someone know your travel route and time to expect you. If caught in your car in dangerous winter conditions, remain in the car and wait for help.

(0)