

Media Advisory – Dec. 10, 2009

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Reardon: Take precautions now against winter weather

Local cold-weather shelters open for families in need

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon is urging residents to take precautions against unusually cold temperatures that are expected to remain in the area at least through the weekend.

December and January are the two months annually where excessive cold, winter storms and ice storms descend upon the Puget Sound. Though the amounts, effects and timing of weather systems often are unpredictable, weather preparedness ensures safety, comfort and well being.

Winter storms and low temperatures can be deceptive killers as most deaths are indirectly related to the bad weather. People die in traffic accidents on icy roads, from heart attacks while shoveling snow or from hypothermia following prolonged exposure to cold.

“If you have not yet prepared for winter weather, then now is the time to ensure your safety and your family’s safety,” Reardon said Thursday. “Be aware of potential weather conditions and take necessary steps to weatherproof your homes and vehicles.”

Preparing Home & Family

- Review and update your family emergency plan.
- Replenish your emergency supply kits including battery-operated radio and flashlights.
- Keep adequate food, water and prescription medications available.
- Have extra blankets on hand.
- Never use charcoal, propane or kerosene heaters indoors.
- Move family pets indoors or to an enclosure out of the elements.
- Winterize your house, barn, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter.
- Clear rain gutters and cut away tree branches that could fall during a storm.
- Maintain a sufficient supply of heating fuel.
- Insulate pipes and allow faucets to drip during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand.
- Know how to shut off water valves in case a pipe bursts.
- Remain updated on current weather conditions.
- Dress in layers appropriate to the weather.
- Avoid overexertion.

Traveling with Caution

- Have your car winterized and make sure it is working properly.

- Install good winter tires.
- Keep a shovel, windshield scraper and blankets inside your vehicle.
- Maintain at least a half tank of gas at all times.
- Check road conditions before departing.
- Let others know of your route and your estimated time of arrival.
- Allow extra time and extra distance between vehicles.
- If caught in a car during a winter storm, remain in your vehicle until found.

“Following simple steps such as these can be the difference between life and death in some cases,” Reardon said.

For those who need it, several cold-weather shelters are open and will remain open while temperatures are below freezing at night. Each has different operating hours and requirements for overnight stays.

They are:

- Salvation Army – 2525 Rucker Ave, Everett WA 98201 (serves men & women); 425-259-8129.
- Everett Gospel Men’s Mission – 3711 Smith Ave, Everett WA 98201 (serves men only); 425-259-0954.
- Everett Gospel Women’s Mission – 5126 South 2nd Ave, Everett WA 98201 (serves women & children only); 425-252-1297.
- South Snohomish County Emergency Central Network (serves men, women and children) at various churches; 425-778-2159 Ext. 296.
- Arlington “Hands Together” Organization, at rotating locations (serves men, women and children); 360-435-3259.

Snohomish County Human Services Department is working closely with area agencies to assist individuals and families in need. Residents with human service needs are urged to call 211. Only life-threatening emergency calls should be made to 911.

For more information on winter weather hazards, go to www.snoco.org/Departments/Emergency_Management/Information/Factsheets.

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