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Public Information Statement
National Weather Service Indianapolis IN
630 AM EST Mon Nov 9 2020

This week is Winter Weather Preparedness Week in Indiana.

Let's do our part as Hoosiers to become a Weather-Ready Nation.

The weather outlook for Indiana this winter favors above normal precipitation and equal chances for near, above or below normal temperatures. Expect mild and cold periods, snow and rain. Ice storms or a blizzard are possible. Snowfall may end up above average.

Whatever weather occurs, everyone must take responsibility for their own safety. Here are typical winter conditions in Indiana.

In mid-winter across Indiana...high temperatures average between 25 and 35 degrees while lows average between 15 and 25 degrees. Record low temperatures are well below zero while record highs are in the 70s. Average winter snowfalls range from 15 inches in the south to over 30 inches in the north with locations near Lake Michigan often receiving more than 60 inches of snow.

Frequent weather systems may occur, perhaps bringing large swings in temperatures as well as potential for large amounts of rain, snow or ice. Minor rain, snow and ice events are more likely. A crippling blizzard, ice storm, major flood or tornado is always a possibility.

In addition to cold temperatures being the norm, wind chill is almost always present, and can be dangerous. Wind chill is the temperature it "feels like" due to the wind carrying heat away from your body. Air temperatures near zero and 20 mph winds create wind chills near 20 below zero leading to frostbite in 30 minutes.

Extremely cold conditions can also cause a number of health and safety concerns including frostbite and hypothermia. Frostbite occurs when skin freezes resulting in numbness and a pale white appearance to the affected area. Slowly re-warm the affected skin. Hypothermia is identified by uncontrollable shivering, slurred speech, drowsiness or disorientation. If medical care is not available, warm the person with a blanket and warm liquids. Do not try to warm the arms or legs first, it drives cold blood to the heart and may lead to heart failure.

Taking preventive action is your best defense against winter cold: dress in several layers of lightweight clothing which keeps you warmer than a single heavy layer or coat; mittens are warmer than gloves; a hat or scarf minimizes exposed skin; a scarf over your mouth protects your lungs from cold. Waterproof, insulated boots keep your feet dry and warm and can help you maintain your footing on ice and snow. When shoveling snow, take breaks to reduce over-exertion.

For heating sources, never use a stove or oven to heat your home. Fire causes carbon monoxide, a poisonous, colorless, odorless gas often leading to death, and often from these alternate heating sources. Never leave fires in fireplaces unattended. Keep a metal fire screen in front of active fires to keep sparks in and hot glass doors from being touched. If using a space heater, follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to safely use it. Ensure the heater is on a hard, non-flammable surface. Turn the space heater off when you leave the room or go to sleep. Keep children and pets away from your space heater to prevent burns and do not use the heater to dry clothing, which if left unattended, could catch fire.

On Tuesday, we will discuss winter weather travel safety.

Visit getprepared.in.gov for more information about winter safety.

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