

Helen R. Caulton-Harris, Director
Spfld. Dept. of Health/Human Svcs.
95 State Street, Suite 201
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 787-6456/787-6458(fax)
(413) 787-6745(TTY)



THE CITY OF
SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

PRESS RELEASE

January 23, 2013

City of Springfield Activates Cold Weather Response Plan

In the event of an imminent cold weather emergency, the Director of Health and Human Services for the City of Springfield (SDHHS) will call for the activation of the Cold Weather Emergency Response plan. The Springfield Department of Health and Human Services will be responsible for increasing awareness of cold weather precautions for the general public and implementing a comprehensive response plan to provide temporary overnight shelter to homeless and inadequately housed individuals. Cold weather “tips” will be disseminated to news media. Residents will be encouraged to call 911 to report the location of individuals who may need assistance, outreach and/or transportation to shelter locations.

Cold weather emergency response measures will be activated at the Director of Health and Human Services directions using the following guidelines.

- **If temperatures are expected to be at or below 10 degrees Fahrenheit with sustained winds of 15 mph or higher, or wind chill factor 5 or below;**
- **If persons refuse to accept shelter during the above weather conditions, Springfield Police will call the Crisis Team to support the Police in making a decision to assess the competency of the individual.**
- **Other conditions deemed by the Director of Health and Human Services to be severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life or health of people experiencing homelessness.**

In Cold Weather Emergency situation, a “Prevention Team” will respond to calls from the Springfield Police Department and residents to assist persons who need transportation to shelter services.

Cold weather tips “Exposure to cold temperatures, can cause serious or life threatening health problems infants and the elderly are at high risk.

Cold Weather Tips –

- Layering clothing
- Hats are a must. The head is where 30% of the body’s heat loss takes place.
- Gloves and face protection are recommended in extremely cold weather.
- Protect your animals during the cold weather. Do not leave animals outside. Provide shelter to keep your pets warm.

- Food that needs no cooking or refrigeration.
- Water stored in clean containers.
- Medicines that any family member may need.
- If you plan to use a fireplace or wood stove for emergency heating make sure it has been inspected.
- Make sure smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detector are near the place that you are heating.
- Do not place a space heater within three feet of anything that may catch on fire.
- Do not leave children unattended near a space heater.
- Do not run cords of an electric space heater under carpets.
- Check on elderly neighbors and individuals living independently with no support system.