



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Wes Bleed or Gary Mack

January 16, 2013

630-357-7552

Village issues cold weather safety tips

Warming centers available on 24-hour basis

ELMWOOD PARK – With temperatures expected to plunge to near zero in the coming days, Elmwood Park's health director is offering several tips for staying safe and well during periods of intense cold.

"If you have to be outside for any length of time, be sure to wear proper clothing," Health Director Janet Slusarz said. "Make sure your face and hands are covered, dress in layers and wear a hat to prevent heat loss." Anyone experiencing signs of hypothermia, such as shivering, memory loss or drowsiness should seek medical attention immediately.

Slusarz also cautioned against using one's oven or stove to heat their house. "Not only is it a fire hazard, but it dries out the air inside your home, making it difficult to breathe for anyone with respiratory problems," she said.

Residents needing a place to get out of the cold can take advantage of two warming centers that the village provides. The Parks and Recreation Center at 2 Conti Parkway is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and the Public Safety Building at 7420 Fullerton Avenue is available from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m.

"This is the time of year to check on your friends and neighbors, especially the elderly," Slusarz said. "It never hurts to make that extra phone call or knock on the door to make sure everyone is doing okay."

Other cold weather tips include eating and drinking wisely. Caffeine and alcohol can cause the body to lose heat more quickly. Beware of slippery conditions, especially on sidewalks where ice tends to thaw and refreeze during the day. Motorists are also encouraged to have a winter weather emergency kit in the car. The kit should include non-perishable snacks, bottled water, blankets and a shovel.

Elmwood Park seniors can take advantage of a new "Dial A Ride" program which provides rides to and from many locations in the Elmwood Park area throughout the week. Call Village Hall at 708-452-7300 for more information. The elderly can also contact Village Hall to request a list of high school students who are available to shovel snow during the winter.

"It's not too late to get a flu shot," Slusarz advised. "While it takes a couple of weeks before the vaccine takes full effect, it actually begins to boost one's immunity within a few days. Keep in mind we haven't even reached the peak of the flu season."

"Be aware of the forecast and take warnings seriously," Slusarz said. "Winter can be a fun and enjoyable time of year as long as people play it safe."

www.elmwoodpark.org