Winter Weather

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Posted by Breck Scott

Winter weather is here, making it an ideal time to check in on elderly neighbors, according to Caddo Parish Sheriff Henry Whitehorn, Sr. During extremely cold weather, elderly individuals are at an increased risk of hypothermia, a potentially life-threatening condition that occurs when the body's temperature drops too low. Symptoms of hypothermia include confusion or mental disorientation, fatigue, and an irregular heartbeat. Other symptoms may include shivering, slurred speech, memory loss, sleepiness, cool or pale skin, and numbness in the hands and feet.

"Winter weather is particularly hard on our senior citizens," Whitehorn stated. "If you have an elderly neighbor, especially one who lives alone or has a disability, please stay in regular contact with them. Ensure their homes are safe and that they are doing okay."

The CPSO recommends the following safety precautions for seniors during the winter season:
- Keep your head, ears, hands, and feet warm. Wear a hat, hood, or scarf, as most body heat escapes through the head.

- Dress in layers of clothing rather than a single outer garment to provide better insulation from the cold. Keep clothing dry, and if clothes become wet while outside, change into dry clothes as soon as possible.
- Remember that drinking alcohol increases the risk of hypothermia and frostbite. Anyone suspected of developing hypothermia should be taken into a warm environment and seen by a medical professional as quickly as possible.
Indoor Precautions:
- Ensure that fuel-burning equipment in the home (like furnaces, hot water heaters, and clothes dryers) is operating properly, well-ventilated, and regularly inspected by a professional to prevent unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Use electric heaters with extreme caution to avoid shock, fire, and burns.
- Keep combustible materials (such as furniture, drapes, and carpeting) at least three feet away from any heat source.
- Never use gas ovens and burners in place of central heating or portable heaters.
Only use equipment that is approved for indoor use.

Attachments

