

Bitter Temperatures Are Coming

Kansans looking forward to a weekend of holiday shopping will have to contend with varying forms of precipitation accompanied by bitterly cold temperatures.

Although snowfall is expected to be minimal across much of the state, ranging from one to three inches, temperatures will plummet with potential wind chill values from five to 25 degrees below zero. Light freezing drizzle is also possible in some regions of the state. In light of such a forecast, the Kansas Division of Emergency Management is reminding Kansans to take stock of their home and car emergency kits and use caution when traveling or working outside.

“The main concern over the next five days is the bitterly cold temperatures,” said Jonathan York, Response and Recovery Branch director. “These temperatures and wind chills can be deadly if you’re inadequately prepared.”

Emergency kits should include a minimum three-day supply of water (one gallon per day per person), nonperishable high-energy foods, extra blankets, flashlights and extra batteries, a safe alternate heat source, extra medications and other essentials.

If you have to work outside, observe the following safety precautions:

- Do not work alone, if possible. Working with a partner allows you to keep an eye on each other
- When shoveling, be sure you are properly dressed with shoes or boots that give you good traction
- Work in short periods to avoid over-exertion

Outdoor pets are especially vulnerable to bitter cold and extreme wind chills. Bring outdoor pets inside if possible or ensure that they have a draft-free enclosure with straw-type bedding that is large enough for your pets to lie down, but small enough to hold in body heat if they must remain outside. Always make sure that your pets have access to food and non-frozen water.

For additional pet safety information, go to avma.org and for general winter preparedness information, go to www.ksready.gov.

If you must travel, make sure you and your vehicle are prepared. Check the fluid levels, ensuring that the radiator is winterized, the gas tank is over half-full, and there is plenty of windshield washing fluid. Check tire treads for adequate traction, and replace windshield wiper blades if they are worn.

Keep an emergency kit in the trunk that includes at least:

- An ice scraper and shovel
- Jumper cables
- Flashlights
- Sand or kitty litter for traction
- Extra blankets or clothing
- Non-perishable food
- A first aid kit
- Matches and candles or flares
- Tow rope or chain

On the road, allow extra time for delays and slower traffic speeds. Buckle up and properly secure children in safety seats. Increase the distance between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead of you. Ice and snow significantly increase your stopping distance.

Road conditions are available through the Kansas Department of Transportation. Check conditions before travel by going to www.kandrive.org or on a mobile device, go to <http://511mm.ksdot.org>. You may also call 5-1-1 from any phone.

For a complete list of items for a home or car emergency kit and for other helpful preparedness information, go to www.ksready.gov.