



# CITY OF MANCHESTER HEALTH DEPARTMENT

## MONTHLY BULLETIN – NOVEMBER 2008



### Ten Things Every Manchester Resident Can Do to Get Ready for Winter

When winter temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can become a challenge. Extremely cold temperatures often accompany a winter storm, so you may have to cope with power failures and icy roads. Although staying indoors as much as possible can help reduce the risk of car crashes and falls on the ice, you may also face indoor hazards. Many homes will be too cold—either due to a power failure or because the heating system is not adequate for the weather. Fortunately, there are simple things that you can do now to get ready for winter as well as community resources to connect with which may be of help.

- WINTERIZE YOUR HOME.** Check the most common areas in your home that leak heat, such as recessed lighting, window frames, doorframes, attic hatch, plumbing and electrical bypasses in the attic, and electrical outlets. Use weather-stripping, door sweeps, foam, and caulk to seal up the leaks. Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators as needed; make sure furniture, carpeting, or drapes do not block them.
- STAY CONNECTED.** Keep emergency phone numbers in an accessible place. Use the buddy system and check on your neighbors regularly. Turn down your heat and keep warm by spending time visiting family and friends. Take turns gathering at different homes on different days. Tell your local fire department about anyone who might need special assistance in an emergency.
- TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH.** Wash hands often, especially when handling food, and after coughing, sneezing and using the bathroom. Get enough sleep each day. Drink plenty of fluids and seek routine preventive care to maintain your health throughout the winter. Get a flu shot – contact your doctor or your local health department for clinic times.
- HAVE A FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN.** Have a plan with your family in case you need to evacuate your home or if you need to shelter in place. Teach children how and when to call 911. For other tips on preparing for an emergency, please visit the Manchester Health Department Public Health Preparedness web page at: <http://www.manchesternh.gov/website/Departments/Health/Services/PublicHealthPreparedness/tabid/716/Default.aspx>

#### MISSION STATEMENT

*To improve the health of individuals, families, and the community through disease prevention, health promotion, and protection from environmental threats.*

- ❑ **KEEP ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES ON HAND.** During the winter season, keep critical supplies on hand such as a battery powered radio, prescription medications, flashlights (with extra batteries), matches, first aid kit, baby food, formula, diapers, bottled water (1 gallon per person per day), can opener and a 3-day supply of canned or dried foods.
- ❑ **CONSERVE HEAT AND ENERGY.** Only heat the rooms you need – close vents and doors of unused rooms. On winter nights, put an extra blanket on the bed and turn down your thermostat more. Visit <http://www.staywarmnh.org/> for additional heat and energy conservation ideas.
- ❑ **PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY.** Keep candles at least one foot away from anything that can burn and put them out before you go to bed. Space heaters should be kept at least 3 feet away from walls or sofas. Never use a cooking range or oven to heat your home, even for a short time. Replace a worn or cracked heating blanket or one where the electric cord is frayed. When you change your clocks, you should also check the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. For additional safety tips, please visit the Manchester Fire Department at: <http://www.manchesternh.gov/website/Departments/Fire/FirePreventionBureau/SafetyTips/tabid/318/Default.aspx>
- ❑ **DRESS WARMLY AND STAY DRY.** Dress in several layers to maintain body heat, paying special attention to feet, hands, nose and ears. Wear boots with nonskid soles. Infants and older adults are more susceptible to the cold and may require warmer clothing for protection. Wool, silk or polypropylene inner layers will hold more body heat than cotton. Stay dry – wet clothing chills the body rapidly. To learn more about the early warning signs of hypothermia and frostbite, visit [http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/pdf/cold\\_guide.pdf](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/pdf/cold_guide.pdf)
- ❑ **AVOID ICE AND OVEREXERTION.** Avoid shoveling if you have a history of heart trouble or are out of shape, unless your doctor says it is okay. If possible, push snow in front of you. If you have to lift it, pick up small amounts and lift with your legs, not your back. Walk on sidewalks if possible and avoid ice patches. If sidewalks are covered in snow and ice and you must walk in the street, walk against the flow of traffic and as close to the curb as you can. Wear a bright scarf or hat or reflective gear so drivers can see you.
- ❑ **STAY INFORMED.** Stay current on the weather reports for the week and plan accordingly. Check your emergency supplies whenever a period of extreme cold is predicted. Dial **2-1-1** to connect to local resources.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Visit our website at <http://www.manchesternh.gov/CityGov/HLT/Home.html>, or call 624-6466