

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

December 11, 2024

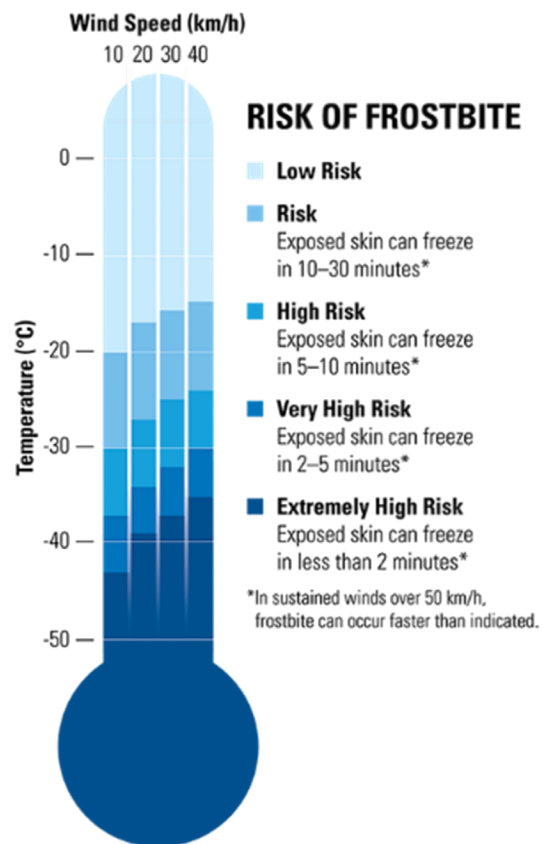
Are you ready for Winter?

Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) would like to remind residents to be ready for cold temperatures this winter. One way to be prepared is to check the weather forecast before you head out. Whenever temperatures are expected to be dangerously low, Environment Canada will issue an extreme cold weather warning for the region. A cold weather warning is issued when the temperature or wind chill is expected to reach $-40^{\circ}\text{C}/-40^{\circ}\text{F}$ for at least two hours.

Cold weather can cause injuries like frostbite, even at temperatures of -15°C . As shown by the image below, the risk of frostbite can vary by a combination of time, temperature and wind speed. As the temperature drops, and the wind speed increases, the risk of cold-related injuries also increases.

Frostbite occurs when blood flow to your hands, feet and exposed skin is restricted because of the cold. Skin may appear pale, grey waxy, and you may notice numbness and swelling. Exposed skin can become frostbitten in minutes and in severe cases frostbite can result in amputation. Extreme cold can also be life threatening. Prolonged exposure to extreme cold can result in hypothermia. Hypothermia occurs when your body temperature drops too low, and it can lead to organ failure and death.

Stay safe by dressing warmly in layers, remaining dry, and keeping active. Limit your time outside if it is very cold. If you are travelling keep a winter driving survival kit in your vehicle and stay up-to-date with road conditions.



Adapted from Environment Canada's Wind Chill Index:
<http://www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&n=5FBF816A-1>

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Remember to check in with vulnerable family members and neighbours when it's very cold to make sure they are safe. For more information on how to protect yourself during extreme cold, visit www.nwhu.on.ca, or <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/healthy-living/your-health/environment/extreme-cold.html>.

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