For immediate release

November 21, 2018

# Ottawa Public Health issues First Frostbite Advisory of the Season

**Ottawa -** Ottawa Public Health (OPH) has issued a Frostbite Advisory to ensure people take appropriate precautions before going outside and to notify service providers of people experiencing homelessness to encourage clients to seek indoor shelter from the cold. This Frostbite Advisory is for the overnight hours of November 21, 2018 until further notice.

OPH issues a Frostbite Advisory when a wind chill of -25 or colder is forecast by Environment and Climate Change Canada for the Ottawa area.  With a wind chill of -25 or colder, exposed skin can freeze in less than ten minutes.  A Frostbite Warning is issued when a wind chill of -35 or colder is forecast.

With extreme cold temperatures, there is an increased risk of [hypothermia](http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/hypothermia.aspx) for people who stay outside for long periods of time without adequate protection. Overexposure can result in severe injury and even death.  OPH recommends that you wear several layers of clothing to keep warm and make sure that the outer layer protects you from wind and moisture.

[Frostbite](http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/frostbite.aspx) results when the skin and underlying tissues freeze.  Skin is white and waxy and feels hard to the touch.  Frostbite is a serious condition that can require amputation.  Medical attention is advised.  Frostnip is a mild form of frostbite where only the skin freezes. Both frostbite and frostnip can be treated by gradually warming skin using body heat or warm water.  It is important to never rub or massage affected areas.

Infants, children, the elderly, people with certain chronic illnesses such as poor circulation and heart disease, and people experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable to cold weather.  Service providers to these groups including schools, daycares, emergency shelters and outdoor sporting programs should assess and adjust their programming to prevent cold injuries.

**For assistance with people experiencing homelessness, concerned citizens can call 3-1-1.**

**For assistance accessing winter clothing and other winter assistance, residents can call 2-1-1.**

There are many services available to help people experiencing homelessness in the winter including emergency sleeping spaces in Ottawa shelters, street outreach services, and the provision of emergency transportation and other services provided by the Salvation Army.

For more information on frostbite, hypothermia and cold weather precautions visit [OttawaPublicHealth.ca](http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/cold-weather-everyone.aspx) or call 613-580-6744 (TTY: 613-580-9656).

Look for live extreme weather updates on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ottawahealth)@OttawaHealth or connect with OPH on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ottawahealth/).

## Public Inquiries

[311@ottawa.ca](mailto:311@ottawa.ca)

311

[http://ottawa.ca](http://ottawa.ca/)

## Media Inquiries

OPHmedia@ottawa.ca

<http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca>