



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT / MESSAGE D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

For immediate release:
January 20, 2022

Frostbite Warning overnight tonight and morning of January 21

Ottawa – Ottawa Public Health has issued a Frostbite Warning to ensure people take appropriate precautions before going outside and to encourage people experiencing homelessness to seek indoor shelter from the cold.

A Frostbite Warning is issued when a wind chill of -35 or colder is forecast by Environment and Climate Change Canada for the Ottawa area. Environment and Climate Change Canada has issued an [extreme cold warning](#) for the city of Ottawa starting overnight on January 20 and continuing into the morning of January 21. With a wind chill of -35 or colder, exposed skin can freeze in less than ten minutes. There is also an increased risk of [hypothermia](#) for people who stay outside for long periods of time without adequate protection. Overexposure can result in severe injury and even death. Ottawa Public Health recommends that you wear multiple layers of clothing to keep warm and make sure that the outer layer protects you from wind and moisture.

[Frostbite](#) results when the skin and underlying tissues freeze. Skin becomes 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. 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 populations are encouraged to assess and adjust their programming as necessary to help prevent cold injuries.

There are many services available to help people get out of the cold including people who are experiencing homelessness:

- Emergency sleeping spaces in Ottawa shelters
- Street outreach services to encourage homeless people to come in from the cold
- Provision of emergency transportation and other services by the Salvation Army
- [Out of the Cold programs](#) where anyone can warm up

To seek assistance for someone who is homeless, concerned citizens are encouraged to call 3-1-1. Calls are answered by the City of Ottawa Call Centre on a priority basis and referrals are made to the appropriate services. Call 2-1-1 anytime to find out how to access social service assistance and information, hours, and location of local [Out of the Cold programs](#).

For more information on frostbite, hypothermia and cold weather precautions visit [OttawaPublicHealth.ca](#) or call 613-580-6744 (TTY: 613-580-9656). For up to date weather forecasts and weather advisories download the free ECCC [WeatherCAN](#) for mobile devices.

Look for our live extreme weather updates on [Twitter](#) @OttawaHealth. You can also connect with OPH on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

For more information on City programs and services, visit [ottawa.ca](#), call 3-1-1 (TTY: 613-580-2401) or 613-580-2400 to contact the City using Canada Video Relay Service. You can also connect with us through [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

For more information:

Media contact
613-580-2450

Public inquiries
3-1-1