



**American
Red Cross**

Heart of Tennessee Chapter

Heart of Tennessee Chapter
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News Release NEWS RELEASE

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Protect Yourself Against Brutal Cold

***American Red Cross Helps Residents
Stay Safer Outside and in the Home***

(MURFREESBORO) January 4, 2010 - As temperatures remain frigid across our region, the **Heart of Tennessee Chapter** is urging residents to take steps to guard against hypothermia and other emergencies common during severely cold weather.

“Winter can be a beautiful time of year in Middle Tennessee, but it can also bring quiet dangers such as brutally cold temperatures,” said **CEO Greg King**, “Everyone, especially senior citizens and children, should take precautions to guard against hypothermia this winter, and the Red Cross can help.”

Severely cold weather may cause hypothermia, a serious condition that predominantly affects young children and people over the age of 60. Symptoms of hypothermia include: confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and severe shivering. Seek medical attention immediately if you have these symptoms.

The American Red Cross offers these tips to stay safe this winter:

Protect Yourself:

- Dress in several layers of lightweight clothing, which will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat.
- Mittens provide more warmth to your hands than gloves.
- Most of your body heat is lost through your head. Wear a hat, preferably one that covers your ears.
- Seek medical attention immediately if you have symptoms of hypothermia including: confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and severe shivering.
- Seek medical attention immediately if you have symptoms of frostbite including: numbness flushed gray, white, blue or yellow skin discoloration, numbness, or skin that appears waxy feeling skin.
- Wear waterproof, insulated boots to keep your feet warm and dry and to maintain your footing in ice and snow.
- Remove wet clothes immediately and help warm your core body temperature by wrapping yourself in a blanket or drinking warm fluids like hot cider or soup.
- Take frequent breaks and stay hydrated.
- Avoid drinking caffeine or alcohol if you think you might have hypothermia or frostbite.

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Protect Yourself at Home:

- Be careful with candles – Do not use candles for lighting if the power goes out. Use flashlights only.
- Inspect fireplaces and wood stoves yearly - Use a sturdy fire screen with lit fires. Burn only wood - never burn paper or pine boughs.
- Use generators correctly –Never operate a generator inside your home, including the basement or garage. Do not hook up a generator directly to your home's wiring. The safest thing to do is to connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. Do not hook up a generator directly to your home's wiring.
- Prevent frozen pipes - When the weather is very cold outside, open cabinet doors to let warm air circulate around water pipes. Let the cold water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe - even at a trickle - helps prevent pipes from freezing because the temperature of the water running through it is above freezing. Keep the thermostat set to a consistent temperature.
- Check smoke alarms - Make sure alarms are working properly and replace batteries as necessary.
- Be aware of overuse of electrical outlets - Don't overload your electrical outlets. Be careful that extension cords don't create hazardous walkways.

The Heart of Tennessee Chapter has additional resources available including a free booklet *Disaster Preparedness for Seniors by Seniors*, written by several older adults who were caught unprepared by a massive ice storm that hit upstate New York several years ago. For more information call **615.893.4272**.

The Heart of Tennessee Chapter of the American Red Cross provides vital emergency assistance to help victims of local disasters in Rutherford, Bedford, Cannon, Franklin, Coffee & Moore counties. Over the past year the Chapter trained nearly 15,000 people in CPR & First Aid, Babysitting and Aquatics training, and provided pre-deployment briefings and emergency communications for over 640 active duty military personnel and their families. Over 13,177 pints of life-saving blood were collected from the community last year. All of these services are made possible by over 320 dedicated local Red Cross volunteers as well as through generous gifts from the local community. To get more information please call 615) 893-4272 or log on to www.midtnredcross.org.

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