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JOINT WINTER/HEALTH ADVISORY

With the temperatures falling this week, Greater Spokane Emergency Management, Spokane Regional Health District, Spokane fire Department, and Spokane Regional Animal Protection Service is providing these tips to keep everyone and our pets safe:

From National Weather Service:

After a relatively warm November, cold air has arrived in the Inland Northwest. Today's daytime high temperature will peak at about 30° and will continue to drop Tuesday and Wednesday with high temperatures only reaching the mid-20s and upper teens. Overnight low temperatures will likely drop into the teens or even single digits in parts of town. The coldest temperatures around Spokane will take place early Wednesday and Thursday mornings with a forecast low temperature of about 10°. A light northeast breeze 5 to 10 mph through midweek will make the air feel even colder

Greater Spokane Emergency Management encourages all Spokane County residents to follow these steps:

Are you ready for winter weather?

Take these three steps to get ready:

1. Check to make sure your emergency kits are up to date or create a kit for your car, home, & workplace. See our website for supply lists: www.GSEM.US or www.ready.gov for more information.
2. Plan for colder weather by checking in with those who depend on you such as children at home alone after school, elderly parents or neighbors to make sure they are also prepared.
3. Stay informed and be aware of the weather approaching by listening to the radio or television, or follow social media channels, for winter storm forecasts

Links:

Greater Spokane Emergency Management - www.GSEM.us

National Weather Service Spokane - <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/otx/>

FROM SPOKANE REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT

Preparing for extreme cold

- Have appropriate cold weather clothing available.
- Make sure fireplace functions properly.
- Fill your vehicle's gas tank before temperatures start dropping.

Here are tips to keep residents safe during extreme cold temperatures:

- If an individual must go outdoors, wear several layers of loose fitting, light weight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. Wear mittens rather than gloves. Wear a hat. Cover mouth with a scarf to protect lungs from extremely cold air.
- Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia
 - Signs of frostbite include a white or grayish-yellow skin area, skin that feels unusually firm or waxy, or numbness.
 - Signs of hypothermia include slurred speech, disorientation, uncontrollable shivering, stumbling, drowsiness and body temperature of 95 degrees Fahrenheit or less.

FROM SPOKANE FIRE DEPT.

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.
- Gas or charcoal grills can produce Carbon Monoxide — only use outside.

FROM SCRAPS:

The temperature is expected to drop into the teens in the next few days and SCRAPS wants to remind everyone that leaving your pets outside in severe weather may put you in the dog house!

Every winter, the Spokane County Regional Animal Protection Service (SCRAPS) checks on the condition of countless animals in our community to make sure that they have appropriate shelter and care. “Despite their fur, dogs can suffer from the cold just like humans,” said Nancy Hill, Regional Director of SCRAPS. “A good rule to follow is if the temperature is twenty degrees or less, your dog should spend only a limited time outside.” That means just a short trip to the bathroom and then back in the house to warm up.

A cat should not be outside at all in temperatures less than twenty degrees since cats are not made for temperatures that cold..

Even when temperatures are above twenty degrees, it is very important for animals that are outside to always have shelter.

To help keep dogs safe and warm, SCRAPS is holding our annual Dog House Drive.

- The community is asked to donate gently used and new dog houses that we can distribute to animals in need. It is a great way to give back to the community and put a no longer needed shelter to good use.
- You can pick up a dog house free of charge at SCRAPS.

“It is also important for animals to have fresh, potable water available at all times,” said Nancy Hill, Regional Director of SCRAPS. “For dogs that are outside for part of the day, pet stores sell heated water bowls which work well in our winter climate.”

Join us in educating pet owners in our community about responsible pet ownership and keeping their pets safe and warm this winter.

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