



Olathe District Schools Winter/Cold Weather Safety Tips



During cold and wintry weather, the following reminders could help you prevent cold-related injuries like frostbite and hypothermia. Frostbite is the freezing of body parts exposed to the cold. Hypothermia is a serious condition that occurs when the body's temperature cools below its normal healthy temperature.

Your best defense against the cold is to dress in layers. Dressing in layers is a concept that has been around for a long time and is useful in trapping warm air produced by the body in between the layers of clothes. The layer next to your skin should be a thin layer and snugly fitting. Moisture produced by perspiration can be pulled away from the skin by this initial layer. The second layer is called the insulating layer and several natural or synthetic fibers can be used in this layer. The outer layer is called the shell layer and works best when it is windproof and waterproof. A hat, gloves (or mittens) and warm socks and shoes are vital components in reducing injuries from cold weather. Remember for safety reasons, when outside in the cold for an extended time period, it is important to have a friend with you.

Warning signs that someone has been in the cold too long include shivering, loss of energy, dizziness, or numbness and tingling to the nose, fingers, toes or earlobes. If you or someone else is experiencing these symptoms, seek inside shelter immediately. Children should tell an adult if they are experiencing these symptoms.

It is helpful to understand the terms used by the national weather service and meteorologists as inclement winter weather approaches. These are:

- * Frost/Freeze Warning means below freezing temperatures are expected
- * Winter Weather Advisory means cold, ice & snow are expected
- * Winter Storm Watch means heavy snow/ ice is possible within 48 hours
- * Winter Storm Warning means severe winter weather will occur shortly
- * Blizzard Warning means heavy snow, strong winds & strong wind chills will occur producing near zero visibility and deep drifts of snow

As part of the overall winter/cold preparedness, it is good to have a winter emergency plan and kit for your home and car. These kits usually include basic tools, extra clothing, food and water, blankets, a first aid kit, a phone and emergency contact information.

The American Red Cross is a good source of additional information on this topic. Their web address is (www.redcross.org).

The Olathe District closely monitors winter/cold weather conditions and has established the following guidelines for outdoor recess:

USD 233 Outdoor Recess Guidelines

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| Outdoor recess | * Outside air temperature and/or wind chill is 20° (F) or greater
* There is no falling precipitation |
| Limited outdoor recess | * Outside air temperature and/or wind chill is between 10° and 19° (F) |
| Indoor recess | * Outside air temperature and/or wind chill is lower than 10° (F) or there is falling precipitation |