

Use this checklist to help keep yourself safe and healthy in cold, wet weather. This resource has been developed for older adults, but applies generally to those living with chronic health conditions or in marginal housing.

## Keep your Home at a Healthy Temperature

Being cold at home is linked to poorer health outcomes. Try to warm your home to at least 18-20°C during the winter. If heating costs are too high, check out the following resources:

- ❑ BC Hydro offers some low-cost tips for keeping your home warm
- ❑ **Crisis funding** may be able to find relief through services like BC Rent Bank or the BC Hydro Customer Crisis Fund.
- ❑ The Energy Conservation and Assistance Program (ECAP) can help you book an in-home assessment and access free energy-saving products and rebates for home improvements. Learn more at [BetterHomesBC.ca](http://BetterHomesBC.ca).
- ❑ Be cautious with space heaters, a common cause of winter house fires. Make sure you have both a smoke detector and a carbon monoxide detector in your home and change the batteries every six months.

*BC Hydro Tips for Colder Weather*



## Plan for Emergencies

- ❑ Sign up for weather alerts through the WeatherCAN app or your local emergency alert app.
- ❑ Find a winter weather buddy who can check in on you during extreme weather.
- ❑ Have a plan to keep essential equipment operating during a power outage (e.g., home oxygen, CPAP machines, ventilators or nebulizers).
- ❑ Put together an emergency kit based on guidance from PreparedBC
- ❑ Make sure your kit includes health essentials in case you need to evacuate. These include:
  - Your photo identification
  - Your BC Services Card
  - Your extended health benefit card
  - Your medicines, including opioid replacements or safer supply.

*Access emergency guides and resources from Prepared BC:*



## Recognize the Signs of Hypothermia

- Confusion, fumbling hands
- Clumsiness or lack of coordination
- Memory loss, slurred speech or mumbling
- Drowsiness or very low energy
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Weak pulse
- Cold skin
- Loss of consciousness

### If you think someone may be hypothermic....

- For someone who is cold, shivering, alert, and complaining—call 8-1-1 for advice.
- If the person’s body temperature is below 35°C (95°F)—call 9-1-1.
- If the person is unconscious or appears not to have a pulse or be breathing—call 9-1-1.
- If in doubt of hypothermia— call 9-1-1.

## Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) gas is produced by fuel-burning devices like camp stoves, barbecues or gas heaters. CO gas can rapidly accumulate to lethal levels if these devices are used indoors during a power outage, or if indoor fuel-burning devices malfunction (e.g., furnaces, woodstoves, water heaters, etc). You can’t see, smell, or taste CO, but you should be aware of the symptoms of CO exposure:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Feeling weak
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of consciousness

## One Fall Can Change it All!

- Winter weather greatly increases the risk of fall-related injuries, which can have long term consequences for health and independent living. Check out the QR-coded handout on *Tips to Stay Fall Free in Winter*.
- Avoid injuries when raking or shovelling by taking frequent breaks, staying hydrated, and sticking with more frequent, lighter loads (rather than a few heavy loads). Always call 9-1-1 if you think you’re having a heart attack.
- Inquire locally about the availability of free or sliding-scale snow removal services offered to seniors (e.g., Snow Angels) or grocery delivery services to avoid having to go out when conditions are bad.
- Connect to additional services, resources and associations for seniors through our *Seniors Health and Safety* webpage.

*Tips to Stay Fall Free in Winter*



*ISLH Seniors Health & Safety Programs*



## Need to Get Out of the Cold?

Find your nearest warming center or emergency weather shelter:



Map of BC Housing  
Emergency Weather  
Shelters

Map of Community  
Warming Centers

