

The winter season can be an exciting time for many people. Cozy sweaters, winter sports, holidays, and so on are just a few examples of the many things people look forward to in the cold season. Unfortunately, it is not always fun and games in the cold weather. Cold temperatures often reach dangerous levels causing a risk for those who spend an unsafe amount of time outside. Understanding the dangers of cold temperatures can help avoid many different risks.

For those who have children and/or take care of children, the winter months can create challenges as it is much harder to spend time outside. Cold temperatures are not the only challenges people may come across in the winter but the variety of different risks from the cold can create obstacles. Frost bite, hypothermia, and even car seat dangers are three of the many issues to look out for in the wintertime.

Firstly, it is important to understand the weather. Different temperatures mean different risks. It is the responsibility of adults to monitor the weather and to know when it is too cold to be outside and for how long. According to ok.gov, 30° can be considered a bit chilly and slightly uncomfortable. A temperature of 15° to 30° is defined as cold and 15° to 0° is very cold. From 0° to -20° is considered very cold with a risk of frost bite and -20° to -60° is extremely cold and frostbite is likely. And lastly, -60° is extreme high risk cold and exposure will freeze skin in about a minute. Understanding how to properly monitor temperatures and weather advisories is an extremely important component in keeping people safe from weather related risks.

In addition to being cautious of cold temperatures, it is also important to be aware of some of the conditions that can develop from being exposed to said temperatures. When skin is exposed to extreme cold, the tissue below the skin can

freeze and cause frostbite. Extremities like fingers, toes, nose, and ears are at most risk for frostbite. Symptoms of frostbite include a burning sensation on the skin followed by numbness. In children, his or her skin can become cold and turn white or pale grey. Knowing the signs of frostbite can help avoid long-term dangers.

On the topic of exposure to cold temperatures, the risk of frostbite is not the only concern. Hypothermia is an extremely harmful condition that is caused by the exposure to unsafe cold temperatures. It happens when the body gets too cold and in turn is unable to produce heat. Keep in mind that young children and the elderly are more susceptible to this condition. To prevent the risks of hypothermia, make sure to dress children appropriately and pay close attention to weather updates.

Lastly, in relation to dressing appropriately in the cold weather, it is also important to keep in mind how to keep children both warm and safe. According to consumerreports.org, winter coats should not be worn in a car seat because it can leave the harness too loose to be fully effective in a crash. If you have any questions or doubts on whether a child's jacket is too big for the car seat harness, contact Sullivan County Child Care Council or Sullivan County Public Health for more information.

In conclusion, focusing on the potential dangers the cold weather can bring is extremely important regarding safety. Whether it is the risk of frostbite, hypothermia, or even car seat safety, it is the responsibility of adults to ensure children do not risk the dangers of cold temperatures. When in doubt, make sure to check the local news for weather updates and warnings to be sure not to risk any unnecessary exposures.