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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Extreme Cold Temperatures on The Way

PORTAGE COUNTY, WI - With dangerously low temperatures forecasted for the next 7-10 days, Portage County Health and Human Services would like to remind residents to take steps to be safe and stay warm.

To protect yourself and your family during extreme cold, follow these safety tips:

- **Stay inside.** When possible, stay indoors.
- **Stock a home emergency kit.** Your home kit should include items such as food and water, cell phone and charger, flashlight and batteries, first aid kit, important medications, a weather radio, and a change of clothes. If you are able to, set aside items like soap, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, disinfecting wipes, and general household cleaning supplies to disinfect surfaces you touch regularly. Visit readywisconsin.wi.gov/make-a-kit for more items and tips.
- **Limit your time outside.** If you must venture out, then wear layers of warm clothing and watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Be sure to have several clean masks to use in case your mask becomes wet or damp from snow. Cloth masks should not be worn when they become damp or wet.
- **Reduce the risk of heart attack by avoiding overexertion when shoveling snow.** Masks may make it difficult to breathe, especially for those who engage in high intensity activities, like shoveling. If you are unable to wear a mask, maintain a distance of at least six feet between yourself and those who are not part of your household.
- **Winterize your car.** Just as you have a home emergency kit, you need one for your car too. Pack items such as blankets, snacks and water, a shovel, jumper cables, and sand. Keep your gas tank at least half-full, and pack additional clean face coverings.
- **Safely check on your friends, family, and neighbors.** If it is safe to do so, check on neighbors while following the latest guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on maintaining social and physical distancing. Consider connecting with family and friends by telephone, e-mail, text messages, video chat, and social media. If you must visit in person, wear a mask and maintain a distance of at least six feet from them.
- **Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows.** Never heat your home with a gas stovetop or oven. Use a battery-powered detector where you have fuel burning devices but no electric outlets, such as in tents, cabins, and RVs.
- **Limit outdoor time for pets.** Extreme cold is dangerous for animals too.

- **Know the signs and symptoms of hypothermia.** Warning signs include shivering, exhaustion, confusion, and slurred speech, and symptoms can look similar to intoxication. Call 911 if someone is exposed to cold temperatures and you see these symptoms.

While residents of Portage County are encouraged to stay out of the sub-zero weather, if homes are without heat there are several warming sites established throughout Portage County. The warming sites will be available during business hours as listed. Remember to wear face coverings, practice physical distancing, and hand washing or sanitizing. If overnight accommodations are needed, residents are asked to contact Emergency Services at (715) 344-7438, the Sheriff's Office Dispatch at (715) 346-1400, or United Way's 211.

Warming Sites include:

- **Portage County Health and Human Services** at 817 Whiting Avenue, Stevens Point, (715) 345-5350; Hours: 8:00 AM-4:30 PM (Monday, Thursday), 8:00 AM-6:00 PM (Tuesday), 8:00 AM-5:00 PM (Wednesday), and 8:00 AM-3:00 PM (Friday).
- **Portage County Public Library** at 1001 Main Street, Stevens Point, (715) 346-1544; Hours: 10:00 AM-6:00 PM (Monday through Friday). There are capacity and time limits.
- **Salvation Army** at 1600 Briggs Street, Stevens Point, (715) 341-2437; Hours: 9:00 AM-9:00 PM (each day). The lobby area will be open during the day with places to sit and coffee available. At night, individuals can head over to the Warming Center to sleep.
 - **The Warming Center** at Frame Memorial Presbyterian Church 1300 Main Street, Stevens Point, (715) 252-7860 or smileforchristssake@yahoo.com
- **Lettie Jensen Community Center** at 487 North Main Street, Amherst, (715) 824-5202; Hours: 8:00 AM-12:00 PM (Monday through Thursday). Not currently open on Friday but will be if needed. Call ahead if there is a need for extended hours. Limiting number of people in facility to 50 people.
- **Rosholt Public Library** at 137 North Main Street, Rosholt, (715) 677-4510; Hours: 2:00 PM-6:00 PM (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday), 10:00 AM-6:00 PM (Wednesday). There are capacity and time limits.
- **Village of Almond Municipal Center** at 122 Main Street, Almond, (715) 366-8171; Hours: 8:00 AM-3:00 PM (Monday through Wednesday). Call ahead if there is a need for extended hours.
- **Village of Plover Municipal Center** at 2400 Post Road, Plover, (715) 345-5252; Hours: 7:30 AM-4:30 PM (Monday through Friday).

Visit the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services website](#) for more information about staying safe during extreme cold.

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