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## Media Release

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### **MORE COLD WEATHER THIS WEEK PROMPTS COLD WEATHER STATEMENT**

St. Thomas, Ontario, January 3, 2018 – **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Throughout the month of December and the first few days of January, much of Canada has been experiencing bone-chilling cold temperatures which are expected to continue until at least Sunday.

Elgin St. Thomas Public Health is, therefore, issuing a Cold Weather Statement advising anyone who spends time outdoors during this cold snap to take precautions. It's particularly important to dress for the conditions because extremely cold temperatures can damage exposed skin in a matter of minutes. Put on layers of clothing, wear a hat, cover the face with a scarf or balaclava, and put on mittens or insulated gloves as body heat is lost through our heads and extremities. People who work outside should take frequent breaks indoors. People with housing issues who have to spend part of their day outside could head for a public space like a library, community centre or arena to warm up.

Overexposure to extreme cold temperatures can result in frostbite. Frostbitten skin might turn red, blue, and eventually a gray/white colour. Individuals may also experience pain, numbness and stiffness, especially in the fingers, toes, ears and nose, which are most susceptible to the cold. If you suspect frostbite, warm the affected area by placing it next to warmer skin or immersing it in warm, but not hot, water. The rewarming process may take up to 60 minutes. Do not rub the affected area as this may cause more damage to the skin. You should seek emergency medical treatment for cases of severe, blistering frostbite.

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Overexposure to extreme cold temperatures can also result in hypothermia, which occurs when a person's body temperature drops below normal. Symptoms of hypothermia include pale skin, extreme loss of energy, confusion and hallucinations. In severe cases, you may lose consciousness, your breathing becomes shallow and it may be hard to find your pulse. Anyone with these symptoms requires immediate emergency care in order to prevent coma and death. If you find someone you think may be suffering from hypothermia, it's best to call for help. Don't rely on direction from them about what to do because they may be confused.

Please keep an eye on daily temperature predictions so you can stay safe this winter.

For additional information, please see the Environment Canada website at [https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/index\\_e.html](https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/index_e.html).

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