



# PUBLIC SAFETY MESSAGE

**Date: January 5, 2010**  
**Subject: Winter Weather Tips**

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## Harris County Residents Should Prepare for Freezing Temperatures

(Harris County, TX) – When winter temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can become a challenge. The Harris County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (OHSEM) reminds area residents to take precautions to protect life and property during the winter weather, including checking on elderly, taking care of pets and livestock, protecting plants and exposed plumbing.

Here are some tips for dealing with freezing temperatures (remember the four “P’s”):

### PROTECT PEOPLE

- Keep warm, stay inside if possible.
- If you need to go out, dress in layers and wear hats, gloves and an appropriate coat.
- Avoid overexertion, as cold weather puts added strain on your body.
- Observe **heater safety**:
  - Never place a space heater on top of furniture or near water.
  - Keep heat sources at least 3 feet away from furniture and drapes.
  - Never leave children unattended near a space heater.

### PROTECT PETS

- Bring pets inside, and move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas.
- Keep adequate food and water available.

### PROTECT PIPES

- Disconnect outdoor hoses, drain and store in protected area.
- Wrap exposed faucets and pipes - including those outside the house or in unheated crawl spaces, attics, garages and other areas.

### PROTECT PLANTS

- Bring potted plants inside or store in garage near interior wall to provide extra warmth and protection from wind.
- For cold-sensitive outdoor plants, put down extra mulch and consider covering with a cloth fabric of some kind to shield the plants from wind and frost.

Protect yourself from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning by installing a battery-operated CO detector and never using generators, grills, camp stoves, or similar devices indoors.

It is also recommended that you prepare your car for winter. Have your car serviced and add antifreeze as needed.

Finally, keep emergency supplies at hand and stay informed about the weather conditions in our area by visiting our website [www.hcoem.org](http://www.hcoem.org).

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