



## Winter Weather Safety for You

**University extension offers winter weather advice for those who spend time outdoors, like farmers and livestock owners.**

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Winterize More...

Get tips for: Your home and barn

Your livestock Though some of us are still waiting for the real cold to arrive as the holiday rush surrounds us, it's a good idea to be prepared for dropping temperatures and biting wind chill.

Knowing how to protect yourself as you complete your farm chores in the cold requires special precautions to avoid serious injuries.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the nation experiences an average of 689 deaths per year attributed to exposure to excessive cold.

The University Extension at the University of Iowa offers a publication that briefly reviews weather conditions, including winter storms, and gives tips on how to be prepared for bitter-cold temperatures. Some highlights: In addition to exposure and frostbite, cold weather also presents risk of hypothermia.

This serious medical condition develops when the core body temperature drops below 96°F. Most susceptible are elderly persons (due to low metabolism) and children (lack of insulating body fat).

However, other people can develop hypothermia even in relatively mild conditions if they're not dressed properly for the weather, they get wet or they're caught in a sudden, strong wind. Alcohol consumption, chronic illness and certain medications also can decrease body temperature.

Severe hypothermia can lead to shock. Emergency medical treatment is recommended.

Signs of hypothermia and frostbite:

Confusion, clumsiness, drowsiness, slurred speech, shallow breathing and uncontrollable shivering

Numbness in the extremities (ear lobes, nose, cheeks, fingers, toes, hands and feet)

What to do:

Avoid outdoor work during winter storms and severe cold

Dress in layers. Cotton socks worn under two pairs of wool socks and heavy, properly fitting boots can keep feet warm

Cover all exposed areas, including neck, face, fingers and wrists

Always wear a hat

Keep extra clothes, a blanket, a source of emergency heat and flares in all vehicles

Watch the Weather: To alert people to the dangers, the National Weather Service issues winter storm watches and warnings. Wind chill indicates how cold it really feels by combining air temperature with wind speed.

For more information on weather and other farm issues in your in your area, contact your local university extension.