

# Cold weather safety tips

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is encouraging all Kansans to be safe and exercise caution when temperatures drop below freezing.

Winter has arrived in Kansas and being prepared can prevent harm from the extremely cold temperatures and wind chills experienced in our state. By taking the time to prepare before you head outdoors even for short periods of time you will be more likely to stay safe and healthy when temperatures change.

"Kansas winter weather can be extremely dangerous," said Robert Moser, MD., KDHE Secretary and State Health Officer. "Serious health problems can result from prolonged exposure to the cold. The most common cold weather-related problems are frostbite and hypothermia. If you experience symptoms of hypothermia or frostbite you need to seek medical care."

Planning ahead and thinking about how each day's forecasted weather conditions will impact you, your family and your neighbors is key to staying safe this winter.

Avoid frostbite and hypothermia:

When exposed to cold temperatures, your body will lose heat faster than it can be produced. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. Warning signs of hypothermia are shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech and drowsiness. Seek medical attention quickly. Hypothermia is particularly dangerous because a person may not know it is happening and won't do anything about it. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and color in affected

areas. It most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes. Frostbite can permanently damage the body, and severe cases can lead to amputation. The risk of frostbite is increased in people with reduced blood circulation and among people who are not dressed properly for extremely cold temperatures.

At the first signs of redness or pain in any skin area, get out of the cold or protect any exposed skin - frostbite may be beginning. A victim is often unaware of frostbite until someone else points it out because the frozen tissues are numb. If you detect symptoms of frostbite, seek medical care.

If there is frostbite, no sign of hypothermia and immediate medical care is not available, proceed as follows:

1. Get into a warm room as soon as possible.

2. Unless absolutely necessary, do not walk on frostbitten feet or toes - this increases the damage.

3. Immerse the affected area in warm-not hot-water (the temperature should be comfortable to the touch for unaffected parts of the body).

4. Or, warm the affected area using body heat. For example, the heat of an armpit can be used to warm frostbitten fingers.

5. Do not rub the frostbitten area with snow or massage it at all. This can cause more damage.

6. Don't use a heating pad, heat lamp, or the heat of a stove, fireplace, or radiator for warming. Affected areas are numb and can be easily burned.

Dress properly for the cold conditions:

Be sure the outer layer of your clothing is tightly woven, preferably wind resistant, to reduce body-heat loss

caused by wind. Wool, silk, or polypropylene inner layers of clothing will hold more body heat than cotton. Stay dry - wet clothing chills the body rapidly. Excess perspiration will increase heat loss, so remove extra layers of clothing whenever you feel too warm. Also, avoid getting gasoline or alcohol on your skin while de-icing and fueling your car or using a snow blower. These materials in contact with the skin greatly increase heat loss from the body. Do not ignore shivering. It's an important first sign that the body is losing heat. Persistent shivering is a signal to return indoors.

Understand Wind Chill:

The Wind Chill Index is the temperature your body feels when the air temperature is combined with the wind speed. When temperatures fall below freezing frostbite can occur in a matter of minutes. As the speed of the wind increases, it can carry heat away from your body much more quickly, causing skin temperature to drop. When there are high winds, serious weather-related health problems are more likely, even when temperatures are only cool.

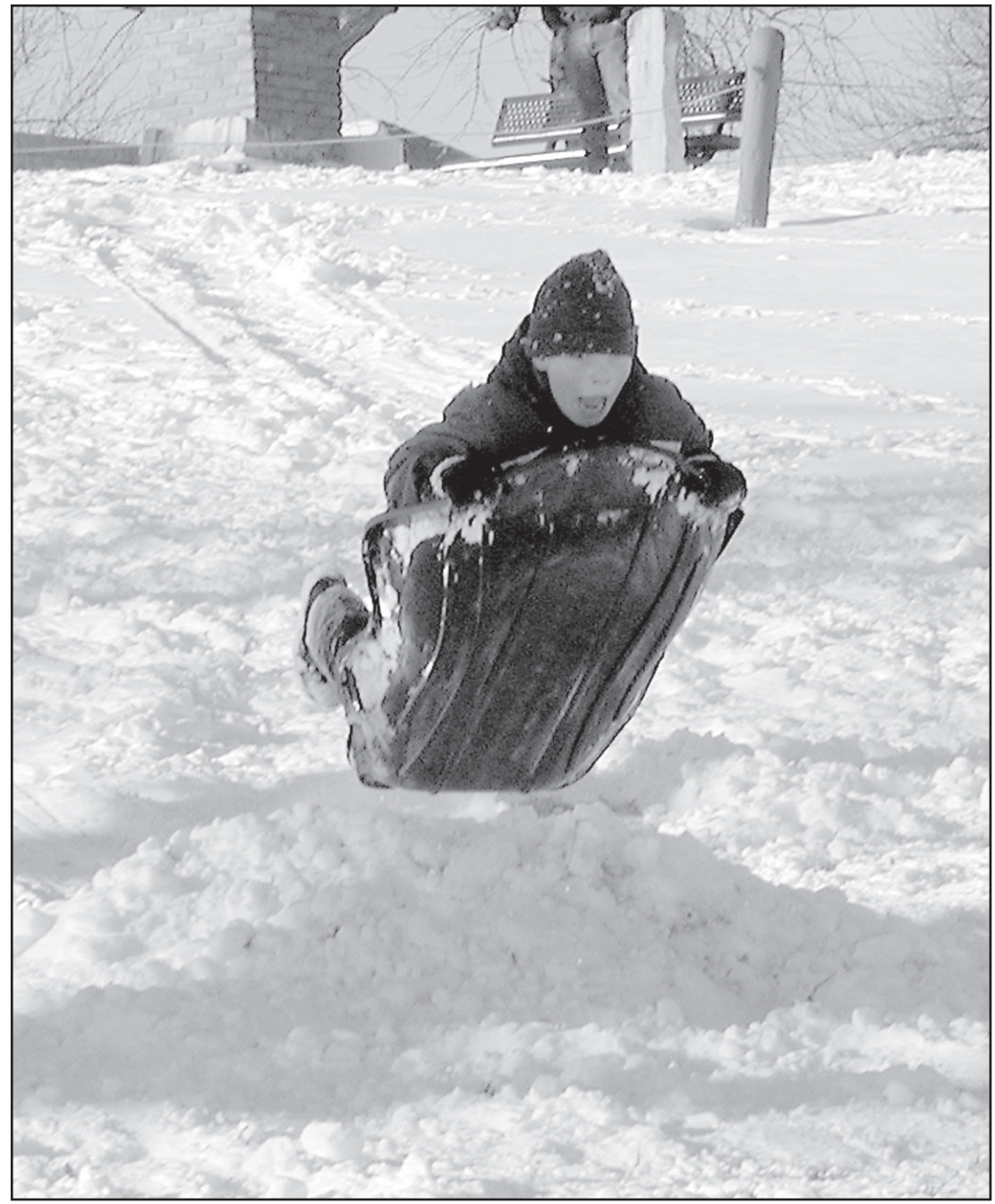
Be a good neighbor and check on others especially the elderly:

When winter weather puts us in the deep freeze make certain that you take time to check on family, friends and neighbors who are especially at risk from cold weather hazards: young children, older adults and the chronically ill. Also if you have pets, bring them inside so they can stay warm too.

For more winter safety tips, visit [www.kdheks.gov/beh/download/winter\\_weather\\_safety.pdf](http://www.kdheks.gov/beh/download/winter_weather_safety.pdf).

For more weather information, visit [alerts.weather.gov/cap/ks.php?x=1](http://alerts.weather.gov/cap/ks.php?x=1).

# Holding on for life...



Brandon Vacura flies down the sledding hill at Elmwood Park last week after the snow storm. A snow ramp was built and Brandon hit it hard and fast, wiping out on the landing. Norton youth take advantage of the sledding hill every year.

— Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

# Online reporting for school inefficiencies is now available

Kansans who interact with the state's K-12 educational system and have examples of inefficiencies that they have witnessed or experienced now can go online to share their firsthand experiences with the Governor's School Efficiency Task Force. The task force launched an online portal where students, parents, involved citizens, teachers and administrators can submit information anonymously.

Recently, Governor Sam Brownback announced the formation of the task force to examine school spending and to develop guidelines on how to get more funding into the classroom where teachers teach and students learn. As reported to the Kansas Department of Education by the school districts, only 54 percent of total funding goes into the classroom and for instruction.

"While task force members are researching and analyzing where inefficiencies are occurring in our educational system, we also want to hear directly from Kansans who have their own ideas and suggestions on how to make our schools more efficient. We hope to hear from a lot of Kansans who take a few minutes to go online and share their thoughts with us," Task Force Chairman Ken Willard said.

Kansans can submit their suggestions at <https://governor.ks.gov/efficiency>.

Willard also announced the group's next meeting scheduled for November 9th would focus on spending decisions made at the district level. He said the task force would receive a report from a representative of the Kansas Association of School Boards Efficiency Task Force and presentations from

other district level education officials. Presenters would be asked to identify best practices for reductions in administrative overhead and shed light on policies that limit their efforts to spend taxpayer money as efficiently as possible.

Governor Brownback said it was important for the task force to have a clear understanding of how state decisions impact local decisions.

"Inefficient spending impacts Kansas taxpayers at every level, from the State General Fund to local property taxes. The state has increased total spending on education by almost \$1 billion since 2000. Many school districts have raised taxes on local property owners during that same time period. Moving forward, we owe it to Kansas taxpayers to ensure those resources are used as efficiently and effectively as possible,"

governor.

"I'll speak up for us and what we care about, but it's not just up to me," he said.

Other than the chairmen, remaining committee assignments haven't been handed out. Rep. Cassidy said last year there were 22 people on the Education Committee and 14 on the budget committee.

Rep. Cassidy said he has two more trips to Topeka scheduled before the session begins on Monday, Jan. 14.

# Cassidy

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As vice chairman of the Education Committee, he said, he'll be trying to teach a lot of new people about education issues, including the new chair, Rep. Kasha Kelley of Arkansas City, who does not have an education background.

"I'm hoping it slows the process down," he said. "Hopefully, we've learned from last year."

Rep. Cassidy emphasized that budget decisions are not just up to him. His committee will work hand-in-hand with the Senate Education Committee, the House and Senate leadership and the

# Council

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2012 at noon, to conduct year-end business.

The Council also approved the enactment of the safe ride home program for New Year's Eve on Monday, Dec. 31. This will be for a one-way safe ride home from the local establishments.

The following building permits were presented:

Herbie Johnson Construction-\$4,000 -dwelling addition at 210 W. Wilberforce

Eugene Worley-\$8,136 -re-roof at 405 E. Holme

Anderson Construction-\$5,800 -construct deck at 511 W. Crane

Linner Construction-\$6,500 -re-roof at 312 W. Holme St.

Magnum Shea-\$3,000 -dwelling addition and re-roof at 410 S. Second

Colby Canvas-\$1,600 -install sign/awning at 411 W. Holme

Scott Evans Concrete-\$600 -curb cuts at 514 W. Washington

# Representative assigned to committee

Last Thursday, Representative-elect Travis Couture-Lovelady received committee assignments for the upcoming session. Couture-Lovelady will serve on the Taxation Committee, the Commerce, Labor & Economic Development Committee and the Federal & State Affairs Committee.

Committee meeting times have been determined for the session, which starts at 2 p.m. on January 14.

Federal and State Affairs, Rep. Arlen Siegfried, Chair (9 a.m.)

Commerce, Labor & Economic Development, Rep. Marvin Kleeb, Chair (1:30 p.m.)

Taxation, Rep. Richard Carlson, Chair (3:30 p.m.)

"I look forward to working toward putting forth policies that encourage growth of small business and a business climate that will create jobs for Kansans," said Couture-Lovelady. "Our tax policies, economic development programs and relationship with the federal government all play a vital role in the daily lives of Kansans and their businesses."

Travis is the Representative-elect for the 110th House district having won election in November 2012 garnering 75 percent of the vote. Born in Hays, Travis is a sixth generation Rooks-countian from Palco. After graduating from Palco High School, Travis attended Fort Hays State University. While attending Fort Hays State he interned for Congressman Jerry Moran. Travis has worked as a field director for Senator Pat Roberts, served as a legislative correspondent for Senator Sam Brownback in Washington, D.C., and Director of Communications for State Treasurer Ron Estes. He currently serves as a commissioner on the Kansas Volunteer Commission having been appointed by Governor Brownback in 2011. Travis resides in Palco where he and his grandparents farm and ranch and operate C Diamond Outfitter. His website is [www.travisforkansas.com](http://www.travisforkansas.com).

com.

The 110th district as changed by the courts includes all of Rooks, Norton, and Phillips counties and part of Graham and Ellis counties. The towns included in the district are Agra, Almena, Catharine, Damar, Edmond, Ellis, Glade, Hill City, Kirwin, Lenora, Long Island, Norton, Palco, Phillipsburg, Plainville, Prairie View, Schoenchen, Speed, Stockton, Woodston, Zurich, and part of Clayton.

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