

POLK COUNTY SHERIFF

Emergency Management

600 Bruce Street

P.O. Box 416

Crookston, MN 56716

Phone: (218) 281-0431

Emergency Dial 911

Fax: (218) 281-0401



Media Release – Winter Hazard Awareness Week 2016

The Polk County Sheriff's Office – Emergency Management Division is participating in the state-wide Winter Hazard Awareness Week campaign, which will take place November 14th – 18th, 2016. Winter Hazard Awareness Week is promoted by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Division of Homeland Security Emergency Management. This week allows Minnesotans an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the hazards we face each winter season. These hazards include dangers from winter weather, dangers from heating sources, and ventilation issues, just to name a few.

Each day of the week has a hazard topic. Monday is winter weather overview. Minnesota experiences a vast variety of inclement weather conditions during the winter months. In Polk County we are especially prone to experiencing brutal cold, heavy snowfall, and extreme winds. A number of different watches, warnings, and advisories are issued during the winter season. Winter Weather Advisories are issued when winter weather will cause travel difficulties. Winter Storm Warnings are issued for heavy snowfall, or the combination of dangerous blowing and drifting snow. A combination of blowing or falling snow, cold temperatures, and windy conditions can prompt a blizzard warning. Polk County is covered by the National Weather Service's Grand Forks Office. You can get additional weather information by visiting their website at: www.weather.gov/fgf.

Tuesday's topic addresses outdoor winter safety. Whether you are out enjoying the snow, or forced to work in it, it is important to dress adequately. During brutally cold weather exposure to the elements can lead to hypothermia or frostbite. It is also important to consider the dangers of venturing onto thin ice. Remember that there should be at least four inches of fresh, clear ice before attempting to walk onto a frozen body of water. Wednesday's topic addresses winter fire safety. During the winter season there is usually an increase of structure fires. Reasons for the increase in structural fires includes holiday lights, holiday displays, and using alternative heating sources. To help prevent fires, keep decorations at least three feet from heating sources, and remember to check your furnace and chimney's to ensure they are operating properly.

Thursday's topic addresses indoor winter safety. Some common indoor safety concerns that occur during the winter are monitoring carbon monoxide levels, managing moisture conditions to prevent mold and mildew growth, and minimizing chemical and environmental exposure. Friday's topic covers winter driving. It is important to ensure that your vehicle has been serviced and is ready to take on the cold weather. A winter survival kit included in your vehicle could be the difference between life and death, in some situations. A winter survival kit should include a bag/container to store food and water, a flashlight, candles, matches, a blanket, and a distress sign to display in the window of your vehicle.

More information on the 2016 Winter Hazard Awareness Week can be found by visiting the Polk County webpage at : www.co.polk.mn.us or by visiting the Minnesota HSEM website at <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem> .

Jody Beauchane, Emergency Management Director
Jody.beauchane@co.polk.mn.us ph. 218-470-8263