



January 17, 2025

Congratulations on the completion of Semester 1! As we work toward concluding this academic year, I look forward to a strong finish. I hope you do too!

In Van Buren County, schools consider closing when wind chills approach minus 20°F. Regarding the approaching sub-zero temperatures, below is a note from the MI State Police with some great reminders.

As sub-zero temperatures and dangerous wind chills are forecast to sweep across Michigan early next week, the Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD) is urging residents and visitors to take precautions to stay safe.

"With temperatures dropping below zero and dangerously cold wind chills on the way, it's important to take extra steps to keep yourself and your loved ones safe," said Capt. Kevin Sweeney, deputy state director of Emergency Management and commander of MSP/EMHSD. "Dress in layers, limit time outdoors, and check on your neighbors who might need extra help. Staying informed and prepared can make all the difference during extreme weather like this."

The National Weather Service (NWS) forecasts that air temperatures and wind chills will drop well below zero on Monday and Tuesday. Wind chills in the Upper Peninsula could plunge as low as 30 degrees below zero, while Lower Michigan is expected to see wind chill averages around 15+ degrees below zero. These extreme conditions increase the risk of frostbite and hypothermia within minutes and can lead to hazardous driving conditions.

Cold Weather Safety Tips

To stay safe during this extreme cold, MSP/EMHSD recommends the following:

- **Limit time outdoors.** If you must go outside, wear several layers of warm clothing and watch for signs of frostbite or hypothermia.
 - Frostbite symptoms: Numbness, loss of feeling, pale or waxy skin, especially on the face, fingers, and toes.
 - Hypothermia symptoms: Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, slurred speech, or drowsiness.
- **Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.** Use generators and grills only outdoors and away from windows. Never use a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home.
- **Avoid overexertion.** Shoveling snow can put extra strain on your heart, so take it easy and avoid sudden bursts of activity.
- **Check on others.** Older adults, young children, and pets are especially vulnerable to extreme cold and should be checked on regularly. Keep pets indoors.
- **Prepare for travel emergencies.** If you must drive, ensure your gas tank is full and your vehicle is stocked with an emergency kit, including warm clothing, blankets, gloves, hats, and a phone charger.
 - If you become stranded, stay with your vehicle and wait for help rather than attempting to walk in the cold.

For more information on how to prepare before, during, and after an emergency or disaster, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/miready> or follow MSP/EMHSD on X at [@MichEMHS](https://twitter.com/MichEMHS).

Best regards,

Randy Fleenor
Superintendent