

CIRCULAR



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Title	Cold Weather Reminder – 2023-2024 Hypothermia Season
Number	CIR-23-14
Effective Date	November 1, 2023
Expiration Date	May 1, 2024
Related to:	GO-OPS-308.04 (Interacting with Mental Health Consumers) GO-OPS-308.14 (Interactions with Homeless Persons)

The purpose of this circular is to remind members that the 2023-2024 Hypothermia Season begins on November 1, 2023, and ends on March 31, 2024.

Hypothermia alerts will be called when the NWS published forecast indicates that the actual or forecasted temperature, including wind chill, is 32 degrees Fahrenheit or below. DHS will also call an overnight hypothermia alert when the temperature is forecasted to be 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below, and the predicted chance of precipitation is 50% or greater.

Members shall be aware of people experiencing homelessness and others suffering from or at risk of hypothermia.

- If emergency medical assistance is required, members shall request the services of an ambulance, remain on the scene until the ambulance arrives, prepare the necessary reports, and make the required notifications.
- If the person does not require emergency medical assistance, members shall determine if the person is willing to seek shelter and request the Office of Unified Communications (OUC) to contact the Hypothermia Hotline. (Note: The Hypothermia Hotline number is 202-399-7093, or people may call 311 for assistance). Members shall inform OUC there is no need for medical assistance and provide the person's description, name, and location. Absent special circumstances, members are not required to remain on the scene.

In assessing whether someone is at risk of hypothermia, members shall look for such factors as being out in the cold without proper clothing or other covering and whether someone's clothing is wet, which can contribute to hypothermia. Members shall assess individuals refusing to move to a warm and safe setting for potential involuntary transportation [i.e., via FD-12 Form (Application of Emergency Hospitalization by a Physician or Psychologists of the Person, Officer or Agent of D.C. Department of Human Services or an Officer to Make Arrests)] to Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP) or another mental health facility for emergency physical and mental health evaluation.

Pursuant to [GO-OPS-308.04 \(Interacting with Mental Health Consumers\)](#), members shall assist the Department of Behavioral Health with transporting individuals who have been determined to need a mental health evaluation to CPEP or other facilities.

Members encountering residents on a call for service who do not have heat on in their residence during this season or during a cold emergency alert, shall contact the District's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency Command Center at 202-727-6161 and report the location where assistance may be needed.

District commanders shall ensure their members give special attention to areas surrounding non-shelter intervention sites (e.g., hypothermia shelters and warming centers).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pamela A. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "S".

Pamela A. Smith
Acting Chief of Police