

# CIRCULAR



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

|                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title                                                                                                          |
| <b>Cold Weather Reminder – 2025-2026 Hypothermia Season</b>                                                    |
| Number                                                                                                         |
| <b>CIR-25-11</b>                                                                                               |
| Effective Date                                                                                                 |
| <b>November 7, 2025</b>                                                                                        |
| Expiration Date                                                                                                |
| <b>May 1, 2026</b>                                                                                             |
| Related to:                                                                                                    |
| GO-OPS-308.04 (Interacting with Mental Health Consumers)<br>GO-OPS-308.14 (Interactions with Homeless Persons) |

The 2025-2026 hypothermia season began November 1, 2025 and ends March 31, 2026. The Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA) has updated the cold weather alert names to align more closely with the District's Heat Plan. The new names are "Cold Alert" and "Extreme Cold Alert". Alerts will be declared when the National Weather Service (NWS) forecasts:

| <b>Cold Alert</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Extreme Cold Alert</b>                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wind chill between 16°F and 20°F with 49% or less chance of precipitation (e.g., rain, snow, sleet); or</li> <li>• Wind chill between 21°F and 32°F; or</li> <li>• Wind chill between 33°F and 40°F with at least a 50% chance of precipitation.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wind chill 15°F or below; or</li> <li>• Wind chill between 16°F and 20°F with at least a 50% chance of precipitation.</li> </ul> |

Members shall be aware of people experiencing homelessness and others suffering from, or at risk of, hypothermia. Members shall look for such factors as being out in the cold without proper clothing or shelter and whether someone's clothing is wet, which can contribute to hypothermia.

- If emergency medical assistance is required, members shall request an ambulance, remain on the scene until arrival, prepare necessary reports, and make 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. 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.

Members shall transport those who are subject to an FD-12 (Application for Emergency Observation and Diagnosis by a Physician or Psychologist of the Person, Officer or Agent of DC Department of Behavioral Health, or an Officer to Make Arrests) and refuse to move to a warm and safe setting to a mental health facility for emergency evaluation.

Members encountering residents on a call for service who do not have heat in their residence during this season or during a cold weather emergency, shall notify OUC to contact the HSEMA to 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 a stylized "S" at the end.

Pamela A. Smith  
Chief of Police