

# Safety Tip

December 2010

## Cold Weather Safety Tips

In Florida, where the weather is warm for most of the year, it's easy to forget that cold weather can bring dangers. Remember the 'five P's' of cold weather preparedness to stay safe during the winter months.

### **Protect People**

Being out in the cold too long is dangerous for anyone, especially for children and senior citizens. Stay indoors, with a safe heating source (see practice fire safety) as much as possible. Dress in layers of loose-fitting warm clothing. This way you can start to take off layers if the day begins to heat up. When outdoors, wear a hat that covers your ears. You lose as much as 40 percent of body heat through your head.

### **Protect Plants**

Temperatures below freezing (32 degrees) can easily kill plants that are not used to cold weather. Bring them indoors or cover them with tarps, sheets or blankets.

### **Protect Pets**

Keep pets indoors as much as possible during cold weather. Pets that must be left outside should have an enclosed shelter with the entrance facing away from the wind. Florida's furry pets often are less tolerant to the cold, because their undercoats are thinner than dogs or cats that spend more time in the cold.

### **Protect Pipes**

If the weather forecast calls for a hard freeze (less than 30 degrees), trickle cold water from one more faucets inside your home until temperatures rise. Insulate all exposed outdoor pipes and faucets with cloth or pipe covers (available at hardware stores). Protecting your pipes can keep them from freezing and bursting, which causes a huge mess!

### **Practice Fire Safety**

Be aware of fire danger from space heaters, fireplaces and candles. Keep space heaters and flames at least three feet away from furniture, curtains or blankets. Shut off all portable heaters when you leave the house or go to bed. Always make sure a fire is put out before you leave the room.