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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Milwaukee Issues Cold Weather Health Warning

City and health officials urge residents to take precautions as extreme cold temperatures are predicted for Milwaukee area

MILWAUKEE – Mayor Tom Barrett and the City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) remind residents to take precautions as life-threatening cold temperatures and wind chills move into the area Sunday.

The National Weather Service (NWS) has issued a wind chill warning for the area, stating that cold temperatures and brisk winds may result in wind chills that could reach 35 to 55 degrees below zero. **The warning begins 6 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 5, through 12 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 7.**

“As extreme cold temperatures move into the area, I urge all residents to take the threat seriously,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “With dangerously low temperatures, common activities can quickly become life-threatening. We ask all residents to refrain from non-essential outdoor activities and to take appropriate precautions during this period.”

During this time city residents can be assured that all essential and emergency services will be operating, including snow and ice removal as well as the City Call Center. All non-essential city services will be officially closed, including garbage and recycling services and City of Milwaukee Health Department health center locations.

“Extreme temperatures can create serious health hazards,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. “The combination of bitterly cold temperatures and wind can lead to frostbite or life-threatening hypothermia. We advise all area residents to follow our safety tips.”

To remain safe during extreme cold weather, the MHD offers these cold-weather tips:

- Minimize the time spent outdoors. If you do go outside, let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Wear appropriate outdoor clothing and dress in layers. Ensure that exposed skin is covered, including your fingers, nose, and ears.
- Make a car survival kit that includes blankets, extra clothing and high-energy foods, and ensure that your vehicle’s fuel tank is at least half-full and the battery is charged.
- Be aware of the symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia. Frostbite can occur within minutes when unprotected skin is exposed to very cold temperatures, causing the affected area to appear white or grayish-yellow in color and feel firm or waxy. Hypothermia is life-threatening, and occurs when the

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body temperature drops too low, causing shivering, drowsiness, clumsiness and confusion. Both require immediate medical treatment.

- Do not touch metal surfaces with uncovered hands. Flesh can freeze instantly to a surface.
- Heat your home with devices approved for indoor use, and ensure they are properly vented to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning or fires. Never use wood-burning or coal-burning grills, camp stoves, or other outdoor devices indoors.
- Keep pets safe by bringing them inside and ensuring trips outside are brief.

During cold weather, check on family members and neighbors who may be at risk for illness or injuries, especially young children, the elderly, and those with certain medical conditions.

For questions about city services, residents are advised to call 286-CITY.

For non-emergency assistance, call 2-1-1.

For more safety tips, visit www.milwaukee.gov/health.

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