

\ Protect Yourself and Your Home Against Cold **Low temps forecast for Lee County**

FORT MYERS, Jan 2, 2010 - As temperatures drop across Southwest Florida, the American Red Cross of Lee County is urging residents to take steps to guard against common emergencies during cold weather. The American Red Cross offers these tips to stay safe:

Protect Yourself:

- Dress in several layers of lightweight clothing, which will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat.
- Most of your body heat is lost through your head. Wear a hat, preferably one that covers your ears.

Protect Yourself at Home:

- Be careful with candles – Do not use candles for lighting if the power goes out. Use flashlights only.
- Inspect fireplaces and wood stoves yearly - Use a sturdy fire screen with lit fires. Burn only wood - never burn paper or pine boughs.
- Use generators correctly –Never operate a generator inside your home, including the basement or garage. Do not hook up a generator directly to your home's wiring. The safest thing to do is to connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. Do not hook up a generator directly to your home's wiring.
- Prevent frozen pipes - When the weather is very cold outside, open cabinet doors to let warm air circulate around water pipes. Let the cold water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe - even at a trickle - helps prevent pipes from freezing because the temperature of the water running through it is above freezing. Keep the thermostat set to a consistent temperature.
- Check smoke alarms - Make sure alarms are working properly and replace batteries as necessary.
- Be aware of overuse of electrical outlets - Don't overload your electrical outlets. Be careful that extension cords don't create hazardous walkways.

The Lee County Red Cross has additional resources available to help keep your home safe as the season changes. For more information call **(239) 278-3401** or visit www.arclcc.org.

The Red Cross is dedicated to helping make families and communities safer at home and around the world. It provides training in life-saving skills and mobilizes relief to victims of disasters in addition to assisting members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. For additional information about the Red Cross and the assistance it provides, making donations, registering for a class or volunteering, call 278-3401, or log on to arclcc.org. The American Red Cross of Lee County is a proud member of the United Way of Lee County.