



# **Stanislaus County Extreme Cold/Freeze Contingency Plan September 2017**

**A Supporting Document to the Stanislaus County Emergency Operations Plan**

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**Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services  
Extreme Cold/Freeze Contingency Plan Annex**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

A special thank you to the Planning Teams who contributed their time, effort, insight and resources toward the completion of this version of the Stanislaus Extreme Cold/Freeze Contingency Plan Annex.

If needed, this plan is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact Assistant Director of Emergency Services, Dale Skiles at (209) 552-3600, California Relay 711, or email [dsriles@stanoes.com](mailto:dsriles@stanoes.com)

**Edited and Printed**

Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services



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## Introduction

This contingency plan is a supporting document to the Stanislaus County Emergency Operations Plan and the State of California Contingency Plan for Excessive Cold / Freeze Emergencies.

The plan describes Operational Area coordination during cold/freeze-related emergencies and provides guidance for Stanislaus County government, other governmental agencies, local businesses, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations, in the preparation for, and response to, emergency incidents of extreme cold/freeze.

The plan recognizes the need for the County of Stanislaus to:

1. Identify when the health of populations and/or subpopulations of local residents may be threatened by extreme cold/freeze conditions;
2. Communicate with the public to convey information about resources available for protection against extreme cold/freeze emergencies in time to allow for preparations to be made;
3. Communicate and coordinate with State and local agencies;
4. Mobilize resources and initiate actions to augment local resources as needed; and
5. Employ the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)/National Incident Management System (NIMS) in organizing a response to an extreme cold/freeze emergency.

The plan recognizes three (3) phases of activation:

- I. Pre-Seasonal Readiness
- II. Excessive Cold/Freeze Alert
- III. Excessive Cold/Freeze Emergency

These phases are activated based on the severity of the risk of extreme cold/freeze temperatures to vulnerable populations, the general population, and animals. The direct involvement of local agencies to protect individuals increases with the severity of the risk.

The plan contains specific actions to be taken in each of the three phases and a checklist to guide actions. The specific action steps include the following:

- Coordinating among local agencies and the State (all phases)
- Disseminating information (all phases)
- Review Plan and confirm roles and responsibilities (Phase I)



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- Identifying potential Warming Facilities (Phase II)
- Risk communication and monitoring at risk populations (Phases II and III)
- Determine need and benefit for activating Warming Facilities (Phases II and III)
- Transportation assessment to Warming Facilities (Phases II and III)
- Local Government consideration for a Proclamation (Phases II and III)

The plan contains the following:

- A description of the purpose and scope of the plan.
- Background information including the history of cold/freeze emergencies in the State of California and Stanislaus County
- Descriptions of the conditions triggering each phase of the plan.
- The responsible local agencies and the actions those agencies will carry out during the different phases of the plan.
- Guidance for coordinating efforts during extreme temperature events.
- Appendices of supporting information.

### **Purpose**

This Extreme Cold/freeze Contingency Plan is a supporting document of the Stanislaus County Emergency Operations Plan and outlines the actions that will be taken by the Operational Area and local government when an extreme cold/freeze event is anticipated, is in the process of occurring, or has occurred. This plan is designed to facilitate preparedness for and response to future excessive cold/freeze events. It also provides guidance for local government and non-governmental organizations in the preparation of their cold/freeze emergency response plans and other related activities.

### **Scope**

The scope of this document identifies local agency actions and how resources in extreme temperature events will be made available for response efforts in accordance with SEMS/NIMS.





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### Background

December 1990, brought record-setting low temperatures to California for an extended period of time during a critical growing period. Temperatures did not get above 25 degrees in parts of the San Joaquin Valley for three to five days. All-time record low temperatures were set at Sacramento, Stockton and Bakersfield. The agricultural industry was devastated as acres of trees, not just fruit, were destroyed. Thirty-three counties were included in a disaster declaration.

In December, 1998, an arctic air-mass began moving over central California. The resulting cold air pool in the lowest levels of the atmosphere led to a devastating freeze to crops from December 20 through December 27, 1998, with periods of freezing temperatures through May, 1999. Severe freezing in many California counties affected agriculture, businesses, individuals and various public assistance agencies.

In 2001, California faced an actual extreme emergency shortage due to abnormal weather conditions. At the state and local level, energy shortage emergency response plans were developed, all tied to power shortages during extreme weather conditions that tax electric demand.

In December, 2006, a severe wind storm and freezing temperatures to the Pacific Northwest left eight dead and up to 1 million without power according to the Seattle Times.

The most recent cold/freeze event in Stanislaus County was in January 2007. The Stanislaus County Operational Area responded by disseminating critical information on staying warm and preparing for their families and animals/pets for the inclement weather. During cold weather, seniors, small children and persons with underlying medical conditions can be more vulnerable to risk of exposure to the cold. Officials asked for donations of clean blankets to help the American Red Cross. Warming locations were publicized and American Red Cross was on standby if warming shelters needed to be open. Stanislaus County experienced \$5.9 million freeze-related agriculture losses.



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### Standardized Emergency Management System

In an extreme cold/freezing emergency, as in all other disaster responses in California, statewide coordination of resource support to local government is carried out through the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). SEMS incorporates the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and, for the use of this document, will be referred to as either SEMS or SEMS/NIMS. SEMS is the state's system required by Government Code Section 8607(a) for managing response to multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional emergencies in California. SEMS consists of five organizational levels which are activated as necessary:

1. Field response
2. Local government (Stanislaus County, the 9 cities, and Special Districts)
3. Operational Area (Stanislaus County)
4. California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), Region IV (Inland)
5. State

When local resources are inadequate to meet the need, the requests are made to the next higher emergency response level until the resource need is met.

### Authorities and References

#### A. Emergency Proclamations

1. Government Code Section (within the Emergency Services Act, Chapter 7, Division 1, Title 2):
  - §8630(a): A local emergency may be proclaimed only by the governing body of a city, county, or city and county, or by an official designated by ordinance adopted by that governing body. The local health officer may proclaim a local emergency if he or she has been specifically designated to do so by ordinance adopted by the governing body of the jurisdiction.
  - §8630(c): "Local emergency" means the duly proclaimed existence of conditions of disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the territorial limits of a county, city and county, or city, caused by such conditions as air pollution, fire, flood, storm, epidemic, riot, drought, sudden and severe emergency shortage, plant or animal infestation or disease, the Governor's warning of an earthquake or volcanic prediction, or an earthquake, or other conditions, other than conditions resulting from a labor controversy, which are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of that political subdivision and require the combined forces of other political subdivisions to combat, or with respect to regulated energy utilities, a sudden and severe energy shortage requires



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extraordinary measures beyond the authority vested in the California Public Utilities Commission.

- It is possible to proclaim a local emergency for health-related reasons.
  - §8625: Gives the Governor the authority to proclaim a “state of emergency” when requested by local jurisdiction or when he finds that local authority is inadequate to cope with the emergency.
2. Government Code Section §8588.15: This government code requires the incorporation of the disability community into the California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) via representatives on the SEMS specialist committees and technical group. It also addresses funding needs for expanded emergency alerting technology in order to ensure early alert and warning to all the disability community, especially the blind and/or vision impaired population. Early emergency alert information in emergencies and/or disasters is critical to the disability community, for example, in the case of mandatory evacuations.

### B. Authority to take preventive measures during emergency

#### 1. Health and Safety Code Section:

- §101040: Authority to take preventive measures during emergency. “The County Health Officer may take any preventive measure that may be necessary to protect and preserve the public health from any public health hazard during any ‘State of War Emergency,’ ‘State of Emergency,’ or ‘Local Emergency,’ as defined by Section §8558 of the Government Code, within his or her jurisdiction.”

“Preventive measure” means abatement, correction, removal or any other protective step that may be taken against any public health hazard that is caused by a disaster and affects the public health.

The County Health Officer, upon consent of the County Board of Supervisors or a city governing body, may certify any public health hazard resulting from any disaster condition if certification is required for any federal or state disaster relief program.

- §101475: Gives a city public health officer authority to take preventive measures to protect public health.
- Stanislaus County Ordinance on Civil Defense and Disaster Council (Chapter 2.52)
- State of California Contingency Plan for Excessive Cold/freeze Emergencies (June 2014)
- Stanislaus County Emergency Operations Plan (2015)



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### Assumptions

- It is the responsibility and authority of the Stanislaus County Director of Emergency Services to ensure that the governmental response to events of excessive cold/freeze is appropriate.
- The Stanislaus County Operational Area will communicate and coordinate actions with local, region and state government, as needed.
- Local Cities, Special Districts and agencies may have programs to address excessive cold/freeze and this plan does not restrict their operations as long as they are consistent with SEMS and NIMS.



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### NWS Alerts

Extremely cold air comes every winter in at least part of the country and affects millions of people across the United States. The arctic air, together with brisk winds, can lead to dangerously cold wind chill values.

Cold weather also affects crops. In late spring or early fall, early arrival of cold air can damage or kill produce for farmers, as well as plants and flowers at your home or business. A freeze occurs when the temperature drops below 32°F. Freezes and their effects are significant during the growing season. Frost develops on clear, calm nights and can occur when the air temperature is in the mid-30s. Each plant species has a different tolerance to cold temperatures.

The National Weather Service (NWS) will issue a Winter Weather Advisory, Winter Storm Watch or Winter Storm Warning when warranted due to weather forecasts.

#### **Winter Weather Advisory – Be Aware**

Wintery weather expected. Exercise caution. Light amounts of wintery precipitation or patchy blowing snow will cause slick conditions and could affect travel if precautions are not taken.

#### **Winter Storm Watch – Be Prepared**

Snow, sleet, or ice possible. Be prepared. Confidence is medium that a winter storm could produce heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain and cause significant impacts.

#### **Winter Storm Warning – Take Action**

Snow, sleet, or ice expected. Take action. Confidence is high that a winter storm will produce heavy snow, sleet or freezing rain and cause significant impacts.



## Cold/Freeze Sensitive and Vulnerable Populations

Cold/freeze commonly affects certain groups, typically identified as sensitive or vulnerable to extreme cold, or lower thresholds than other populations. Some of these groups include:

- Homeless
- The elderly and the very young;
- Those on certain medications and/or with preexisting conditions which make them sensitive to cold/freeze;
- Those working outdoors – especially new workers, temporary workers, or those returning to work after a week or more off;
- Those without a reliable source of warming;
- Those not acclimated to the level of cold/freeze expected – especially those who are used to a much warmer climate;
- Some economic sectors are also affected by increasing levels of cold/freeze, such as energy and transportation.

Any individual, regardless of age, sex, or health status can develop frostbite or hypothermia. Frostbite can occur in a matter of minutes. Areas most prone to frostbite are uncovered skin and the extremities, such as hands and feet. Hypothermia is a medical emergency that occurs when your body loses heat faster than it produces it. The most common causes of hypothermia are exposure to cold weather conditions or cold water. Left untreated, hypothermia can eventually lead to complete failure of your heart and respiratory system and eventually to death. Confusion, shivering, difficulty speaking, sleepiness, and stiff muscles are signs of hypothermia. Primary treatments are methods to warm the body back to a normal temperature.



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### Local response Phases

To prepare members of the public and government resources for extreme cold/freezing conditions, a series of three escalating response levels are referred to as Phase I, Phase II and Phase III activations, depending upon severity of the threat to public health as well as animals and agriculture. The general criteria for gauging the severity of threat posed by a cold/freezing emergency are described in this section.

#### Phase I – Pre-Seasonal Readiness

Phase I actions are taken prior to colder months (usually in October or early November) to prepare for and maintain a state of increased readiness. Pre-Seasonal Readiness will be initiated each year in October or early November by the Cold/Freeze Specialist Group consisting of, but not limited to, representatives from Stanislaus County OES, Public Health, Ag Commissioner, Community Services Agency, Animal Services, other County Departments, Cities within Stanislaus County, Medical Response Agencies, and Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs).

This includes the following actions:

- Review of existing plans, procedures, and resources with key stakeholders
- Verify list of Warming Zones with local government for publication with each agency (i.e. senior centers, libraries, community centers)
- Discuss transportation methods that may be utilized in Phase II and Phase III for Warming Centers
- Update and validate communication methods for response agencies
- Determine plan for public awareness outreach materials to include self-assessment and include a “watch out for your neighbor” campaign
- Identify and verify list of vulnerable populations and coordinating agencies
- Update information and risk communication processes for vulnerable populations
- Review communication, coordination and support capabilities and methods with local non-governmental and faith-based organizations

#### Phase II – Cold/Freeze Alert

Benchmarks for Phase II are monitored by local government and include but are not limited to credible predictions by the National Weather Service (NWS) of excessive cold/freezing or of power outages during colder than normal weather conditions in Stanislaus County. During this





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phase, contact with local agencies, stakeholders and coordination among State agencies increases.

Specific benchmarks include:

- A Partner email from the National Weather Service, giving an outlook for an extended period of colder than average temperatures
- A Winter Storm Warning or Watch is issued by the National Weather Service (NWS)
- Credible predictions of power outages, electrical blackouts, or rotating blackouts (e.g., CAISO Stages 1- 3 Electrical Emergencies) are issued during periods of cold/freeze
- Abnormal animal mortality rates (poultry and livestock) and trees / crop impacts

Phase II actions by local government may include the following:

- Participate in periodic or daily calls as needed with State agencies regarding weather and power updates
- Coordinate between Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services (OES), cities, the Public Health Officer, Community Services Agency (CSA), Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), Ag Commissioner, Department of Environmental Services (DER), Area Agency for the Aging, Animal Services, Utilities, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), and First Responder Agencies regarding potential activation of StanMAC to consider response actions
- Determine need for Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation
- Activate the Joint Information Center (JIC) and increase public information efforts including Social Media and Stanemergency.com
- Release pre-scripted winter weather protective measures to all media sources
- Initiate or continue risk communication efforts to vulnerable populations as outlined in Phase I
- Monitor impacts to agriculture including animal mortality, trees / crop impacts and coordination with industry
- Initiate medical surveillance specific to cold/freeze impacts through the Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator (MHOAC), including long term care facilities, EMS ambulance runs and hospitals
- Confirm details of agency participation, staffing
- Ensure employees have updated cold/freeze emergency materials



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- Coordinate with the managers and owners of any Warming Centers considered for publication
- Publicize and communicate Warming Zone locations
- Consider need for activating additional Warming Centers
- Develop a transportation working group consisting of public, private, volunteer and service organizations to identify and develop a transportation component and procedures to ensure vulnerable populations are provided transportation to Warming Zones or Centers
- Coordinate with local utilities to assess power restrictions or limitations
- Track cold/freeze related fatalities

### Phase III – Excessive Cold/Freeze Warning

Phase III benchmarks include:

- National Weather Service warnings for more than three consecutive days.
- Abnormal animal mortality rates due to excessive cold/freeze
- Extensive damage to trees / crops
- Abnormal human medical emergencies and mortality due to excessive cold/freeze
- CAISO Stage 3 Electrical Emergency and /or extended power outages during expected excessive cold/freeze conditions

Phase III efforts include urgent and comprehensive actions to mitigate injury, damage and health threats during the most severe cold/freeze events. These actions may include:

- Continuing actions identified in Phase II
- Increasing coordinating calls with local, regional and State resources
- Determine need to activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and/or the Department Operations Center (DOC) if not already activated
- Determine need for mutual aid resources
- Joint Information Center to increase and continue public information efforts
- Consider activating Warming Zones and Centers
- Coordinate with local utilities to assess power restrictions or limitations



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- Consider activating community information and public health call lines
- Conduct bed polling status of hospitals and monitor status of medical facilities
- Establish communication with local dialysis centers, skilled nursing facilities, and long-term care facilities to monitor for possible medical impacts if there is concern regarding potential, prolonged, or rolling power outages or blackouts
- Monitor rendering capacity statewide
- Consider local proclamation
- Ensure employees have updated cold/freeze emergency materials
- Ensure pet and animal cold/freeze impacts are being addressed through special facilities or pet accommodations at Warming Zones or other locations
- Track cold/freeze related fatalities and medical emergencies
- Track damage to trees/ crops
- Monitor for possible medical impacts of prolonged power outages or rolling blackouts
- Monitor Warming Centers providing regular updates on numbers of persons at each, access and functional related needs, support issues, and power availability
- Identify any regulatory or ordinance issues that may need to be suspended
- Identify transportation resources for Warming Centers



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### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Local preparedness efforts must be coordinated across levels of local government, within the SEMS/NIMS framework. The following pages include Action Checklists for each Phase and examples of Emergency Operations Center organization charts for Phase II and Phase III.



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### Phase I - Action Checklists

These Action Checklists may be used when an Extreme Cold/Freeze Incident is at Phase I –

#### Pre-Season Readiness.

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##### OES

- Conduct pre-season meeting with stakeholders to review plan and confirm actions.
- Update and validate communication methodologies with stakeholders.
- Monitor cold/freeze indicators from the National Weather Service throughout the season.
- Update stanemergency.com with pre-season cold/freeze information.

##### Cities

- Verify list of Warming Zones for cities
  - Name of Facility
  - Address
  - Hours of Operation
  - Will facility extend hours during a cold/freeze incident
- Coordinate with managers and owners of Warming Zone facilities that their information may be publicized during a cold/freeze incident.
- Identify and discuss transportation methods that may be used in Phase II and Phase III for Warming Zones and Warming Centers.
- Identify communication methodology for local vulnerable populations.



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### Community Services Agency (CSA)

- Verify list of Warming Zones for County facilities.
  - Name of Facility
  - Address
  - Hours of Operation
  - Will facility extend hours during a cold/freeze incident
  
- Coordinate with managers and owners of Warming Zone facilities that their information may be publicized during a cold/freeze incident.

### Public Health

- Provide initial risk communication and public information that may be duplicated and that jurisdictions and agencies may share with vulnerable populations.
  
- Discuss developing and/or updating public outreach materials.
  
- Identify information that may be shared via social media.
  
- Identify and verify list of vulnerable populations (e.g. socially isolated individuals, elderly, outside laborers) and coordinating agencies.

### County Departments

- County departments whose clients include those in the risk category identify communication methodologies with their clients.
  
- Determine methodologies for monitoring clients during a Phase II and Phase III cold/freeze incident.



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### **Non-Governmental Organizations (including but not limited to: Advancing Vibrant Communities, Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Latino Emergency Council and Catholic Charities)**

- Identify capabilities to support local government and communities during a cold/freeze incident.
  
- Identify communication and monitoring methods for at-risk populations that the NGO serves.
  
- Help identify other partner agencies.

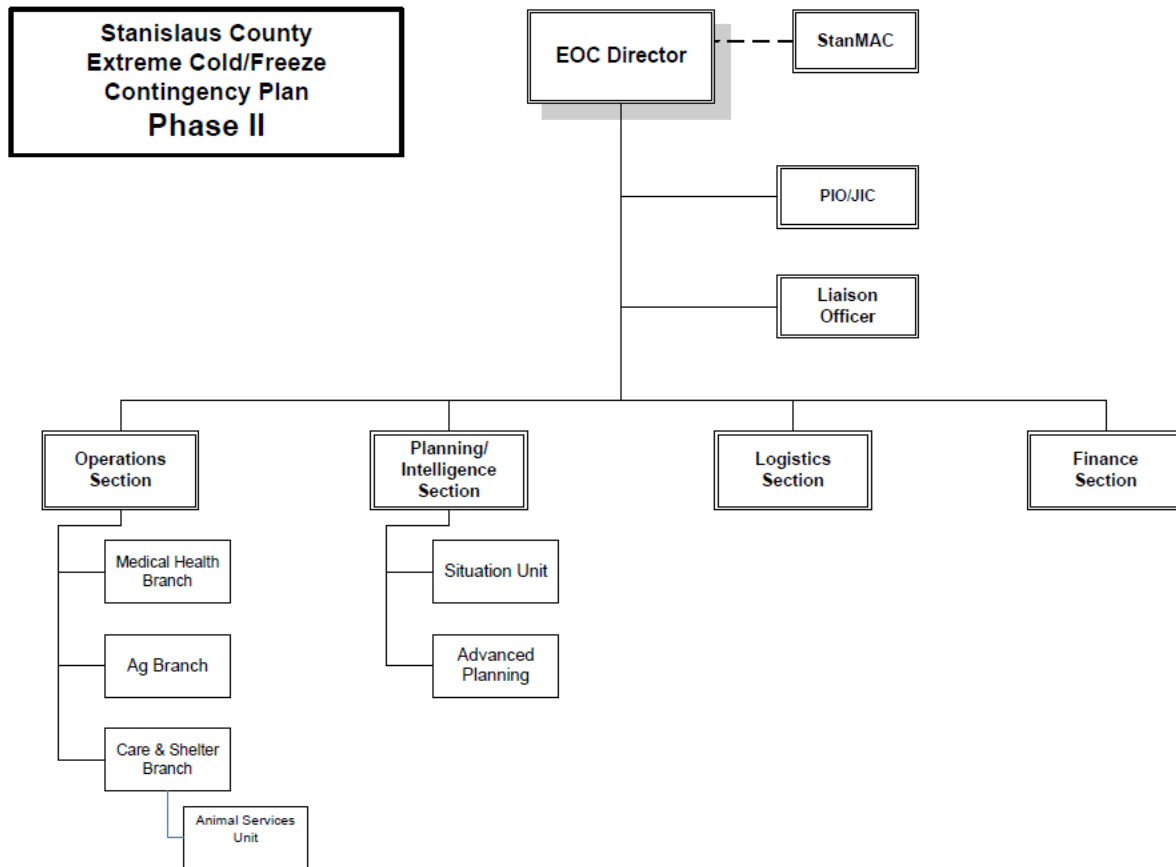




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## Phase II - EOC Organization Chart Example

Below is an example of a Stanislaus County Emergency Operations Center organization during a Phase II activation in response to an extreme cold/freeze event. Action Checklists for a Phase II activation follow.





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### Phase II - Action Checklists

These Action Checklists may be used when an Extreme Cold/Freeze incident has reached Phase II– Excessive Winter Watch/Advisory.

#### OES/EOC Director

- Review EOC Director Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Participate in periodic or daily calls as needed with State agencies regarding weather and power updates.
- Coordinate between Stanislaus County OES, cities, the Public Health Officer, Community Services Agency (CSA), Behavior Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), Ag Commissioner, Animal Services, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), and First Responder Agencies regarding potential activation of StanMAC to consider response actions.

#### StanMAC

- Review Stanislaus County StanMAC Policy.
- Conduct Threat Assessment Group (TAG).
- Determine need / level for EOC Activation.

#### Public Information Officer/Joint Information Center

- Review Public Information Officer Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Activate the Joint Information Center (JIC) and increase public information efforts including Social Media and Stanemergency.com.
- Consider methods to alert and warn vulnerable populations.
- Release pre-scripted cold/freeze protective measures to all media sources.



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- Publicize and communicate Warming Zone locations.
- Publicize request for citizens and agencies to enhance checks on homebound individuals.
- Consider use of 2-1-1 (United Way) for public phone contact.
- Consider use of Medical Reserve Corp for public hotline or door-to-door contact.

### **Liaison**

- Review Liaison Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Ensure employees have updated cold/freeze emergency materials.
- Coordinate with local utilities to assess power restrictions or limitations.
- Establish communication with local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

### **Operations Section**

- Review Operations Section Coordinator Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.

### **Medical Health Branch**

- Review Medical Health Branch Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Initiate or continue risk communication efforts to vulnerable populations as outlined in Phase I.
- Initiate medical surveillance specific to cold/freeze impacts through MHOAC including long-term care facilities, skilled nursing facilities, and dialysis centers.
- Track cold/freeze related fatalities, medical emergencies and ambulance runs.



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- Advise at-risk medical facilities to monitor ambient indoor temperature.
- Prepare Public Health staff for possibility of Warming Center coordination and support.
- Monitor the potential for power loss to electrically dependent individuals using the <https://empowermap.hhs.gov/> tool.

### Agriculture Branch

- Review Ag Branch Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Monitor impacts to agriculture including animal mortality, trees/crop impacts, and coordination with industry.
- Determine potential impacts to landfills due to cold/freeze-related animal mortality.

### Care and Shelter Branch

- Review Care and Shelter Branch Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Coordinate with the managers and owners of any Warming Zones being considered for publication.
- Consider need for activating Warming Centers.
- Identify potential Warming Center sites.
- Coordinate with Animal Services for care and shelter of pets.



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### **Logistics Section**

- Review Logistic Section Coordinator Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
  
- Develop a transportation working group consisting of public, private, volunteer and service organizations to identify and develop a transportation component and procedures to ensure vulnerable populations are provided transportation to Warming Zones or Warming Centers.

### **Planning/Intelligence Section**

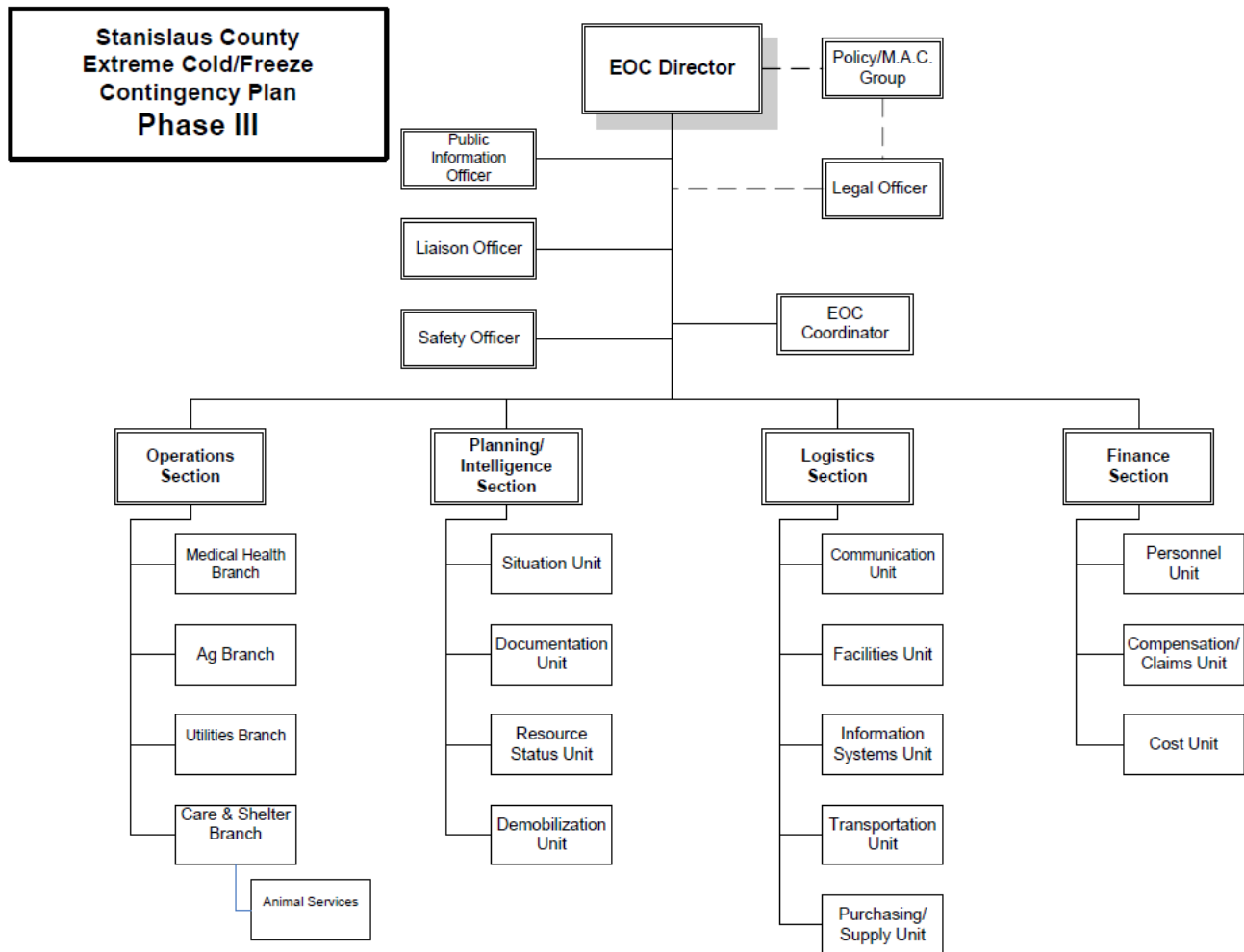
- Review Planning/Intelligence Section Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
  
- Confirm details of agency participation, staffing.
  
- Consider long-term planning needs including advanced planning for extended incident.
  
- Develop EOC Action Plan.



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## Phase III - EOC Organization Chart Example

An example of a Stanislaus County Emergency Operations Center organization during Phase III activation in response to an extreme cold/freeze event is illustrated below.





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### Phase III - Action Checklists

These Action Checklists may be used in addition to the Phase II Checklist when an Extreme Cold/Freeze Incident has reached Phase III – Excessive Cold/Freeze Warning.

#### OES/EOC Director

- Review EOC Director Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Review Phase II Checklist.
- Increase coordinating calls with local, regional and State resources.

#### StanMAC

- Review Stanislaus County StanMAC Policy.
- Conduct Threat Assessment Group (TAG).
- Determine need to activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and/or the Department Operations Center (DOC) if not already activated.
- Consider local proclamation.
- Identify any regulatory or ordinance issues that may need to be suspended.

#### Public Information Officer/Joint Information Center

- Review Public Information Officer Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Review Phase II Checklist.
- Increase and continue public information efforts.



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- Consider activating community information and public health call lines. (2-1-1 United Way Call Center)

### Liaison

- Review Liaison Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Review Phase II Checklist.
- Ensure employees have updated cold/freeze emergency materials.

### Operations Section

- Review Operations Section Coordinator Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Review Phase II Checklist.
- Determine need for mutual aid resources.

### Medical Health Branch

- Review Medical Health Branch Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Review Phase II Checklist.
- Conduct bed polling status of hospitals and skilled nursing facilities and monitor status of all medical facilities.
- Track cold/freeze related fatalities and morbidity.
- Establish communication with local dialysis centers if there is concern regarding potential power outages.
- Monitor for medical impacts of prolonged power outages or rolling blackouts.





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### Agriculture Branch

- Review Ag Branch Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Review Phase II Checklist.
- Monitor tree/crop impacts statewide.

### Care and Shelter Branch

- Review Care and Shelter Branch Position Checklist in Emergency Operations Center.
- Review Phase II Checklist.
- Consider activating Warming Centers.
- Coordinate with American Red Cross to open Warming Center/s.
- Coordinate with Animal Services to ensure pet and animal cold/freeze impacts are being addressed through special facilities or pet accommodations at Warming Centers or other locations.
- Monitor Warming Centers and provide regular updates on numbers of persons at each, access and functional needs, support issues, and power availability.
- Develop process to check on shut-in or at-risk populations.

### Utilities

- Coordinate with local utilities to assess power restrictions or limitations.



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### Logistics Section

- Review Logistic Section Position Checklists in Emergency Operations Center.
- Review Phase II Checklist.
- Identify transportation resources for Warming Centers.

### Planning/Intelligence Section

- Review Planning/Intelligence Section Checklists in Emergency Operations Center.
- Review Phase II Checklist
- Confirm details of agency participation, staffing.
- Consider GIS function for mapping cold/freeze related trends and/or fatalities.
- Develop EOC Action Plan.



## **Appendix A: National Weather Service Definitions**

The following terms are specific as well as commonly accepted definitions to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. Some of the terms may have different meanings outside of the scope of this plan.

### **Partner Emails**

Issued when the potential exists for a weather event, such as excessive cold/freeze, in the next 1-7 days. This email is a non-public product and is intended to assist our partners with making operational plans, based on potential weather events.

### **Winter Weather Advisories**

Issued for accumulations of snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and sleet which will cause significant inconveniences and, if caution is not exercised, could lead to life-threatening situations.

### **Winter Storm Outlook**

Issued prior to a Winter Storm Watch. The Outlook is given when forecasters believe winterstorm conditions are possible and are usually issued 3 to 5 days in advance of a winterstorm.

### **Winter Storm Watch**

Alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Winter Storm Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before the beginning of a Winter Storm.

### **Winter Storm Warning**

Issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet is imminent or occurring. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin.

### **Dense Fog Advisory**

Issued when fog will reduce visibility to  $\frac{1}{4}$  miles or less over a widespread area.

### **Freezing Rain**

Rain that falls onto a surface with a temperature below freezing. This causes it to freeze to surfaces, such as trees, cars, and roads, forming a coating or glaze of ice. Even small accumulations of ice can cause a significant hazard.



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### **Frost Advisories**

Issued when widespread frost may occur. Frost advisories are not issued after the first freeze event of the winter until spring bloom begins. Although warm season plants may die with the first frost, there are no frost warnings because frost damage is generally cosmetic to cold season crops.

### **Freeze Warnings**

Issued to areas with significant commercial agriculture whenever the first freeze of the winter is expected. The first freeze is defined as “when minimum shelter temperature is forecast to be 32 degrees or less during the locally defined growing season.” Normally no additional freeze warnings are issued for an area after the first freeze of the winter, except for the following:

### **Hard Freeze**

Hard Freezes can cause widespread damage to water pipes, harm ornamental plants which usually are hardy in winter and cause significant destruction of winter crops such as citrus and avocados. The general rule is to look for hard freeze warnings when temperatures in the central and southern Central Valley are expected to fall to 25 degrees or less.



## Appendix B: Wind Chill Temperature Index

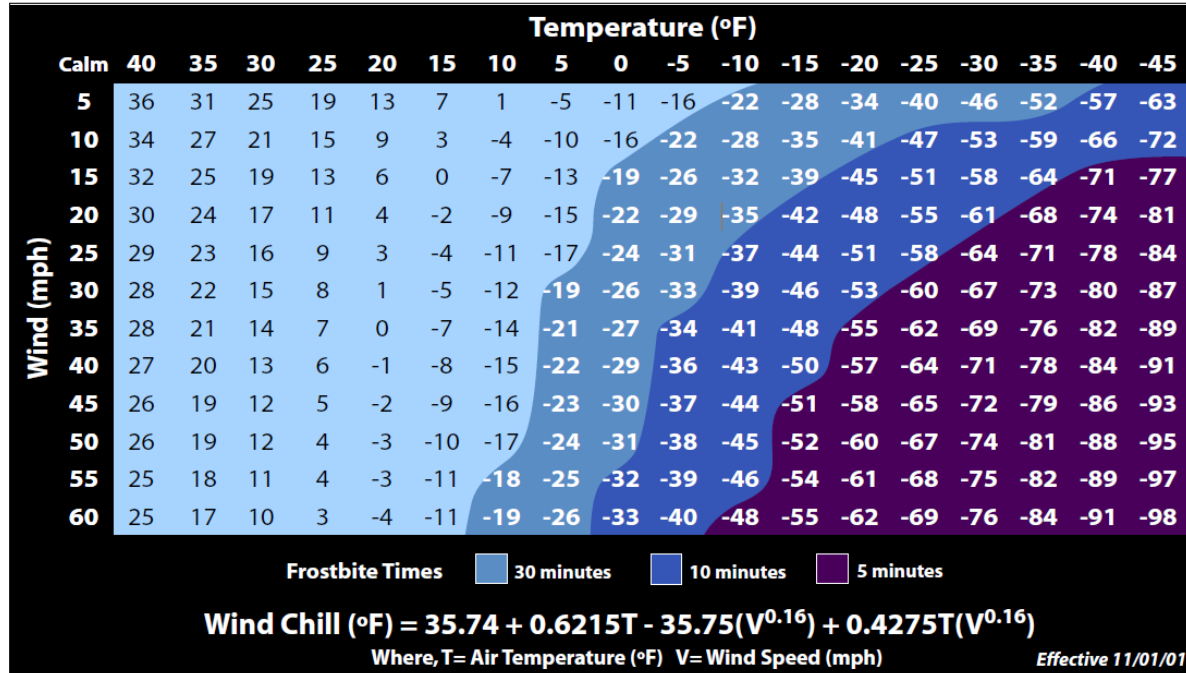
The NWS Wind Chill Temperature (WCT) index uses advances in science, technology, and computer modeling to provide an accurate, understandable, and useful formula for calculating the dangers from winter winds and freezing temperatures. The index does the following:

- Calculates wind speed at an average height of 5 feet, the typical height of an adult human face, based on readings from the national standard height of 33 feet, typical height of an anemometer
- Is based on a human face model
- Incorporates heat transfer theory based on heat loss from the body to its surroundings, during cold and breezy/windy days
- Lowers the calm wind threshold to 3 mph
- Uses a consistent standard for skin tissue resistance
- Assumes no impact from the sun, i.e., clear night sky

Wind chill temperature is the temperature it “feels like” outside and is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by the effects of wind and cold. As the wind increases, the body is cooled at a faster rate causing the skin temperature to drop. Wind chill does not impact inanimate objects like car radiators and exposed water pipes because these objects cannot cool below the actual air temperature.



## Wind Chill Chart





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The Wind Chill Chart includes a frostbite indicator, showing the points where temperature, wind speed and exposure time will produce frostbite on humans. The chart above includes three shaded areas of frostbite danger. Each shaded area shows how long (30, 10 and 5 minutes) a person can be exposed before frostbite develops. For example, a temperature of 0°F and a wind speed of 15 mph will produce a wind chill temperature of -19°F. Under these conditions, exposed skin can freeze in 30 minutes. <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/windchill/index.shtml>



## Appendix C: The Electrical Grid and CAL-ISO

Electric power capability and transmission grid is impacted by the increased loads resulting from cold/freeze events. The California Independent System Operator (CAL-ISO) manages the flow of electricity across the high-voltage, long-distance power lines that make up 80 percent of California's and a small part of Nevada's grid, except in areas serviced by municipal utilities. Locally, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) is inside the Cal-ISO area but Modesto Irrigation District and Turlock Irrigation District are not part of the Cal-ISO.

Cal-ISO issues notification when operating reserves or transmission capacity limitations threaten the ability of the Cal-ISO to safely and reliably operate the grid. Three types of notifications are issued: Operational Notifications, Conservation Notifications, and Stage Emergency Notifications.

**Operational Notifications** are for generator operators and ensures that all grid assets are available for use to manage grid reliability during challenging grid conditions, such as heat waves and other challenging grid conditions.

**Conservation Notifications** are part of a consumer educational and alert program that encourages the public to better prepare for service interruptions and encourages emergency conservation that may help prevent blackouts from occurring. Warnings are a stronger conservation notification than Flex Alerts predicting grid operations will have to start using reserves. Warnings may be called before a Stage Emergency, only if time allows for voluntary conservation to have an impact in reducing demand.

**Stage Emergency Notifications** are triggered when immediate steps are required to protect the grid. A stage emergency can be issued in any order depending on events.

Locally, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) is inside the Cal-ISO area. Modesto Irrigation District (MID) and Turlock Irrigation District (TID) are not part of the Cal-ISO.

**Stage 1  
Emergency**

**Operating reserve shortfalls exist or are forecast to occur, and available resources are insufficient to maintain the operating reserve requirement**  
Strong request for conservation

**Stage 2  
Emergency**

**Non-spinning reserve requirement cannot be maintained**  
Requires ISO intervention in the market

**Stage 3  
Emergency**

**Spinning reserve is depleted or is anticipated to fall below minimum requirement**  
Issue notice of potential load interruptions to utilities

Warming Centers are not exempt from rotating power outages. There are no commonly defined criteria for warming centers.





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## **Appendix D: Extreme Cold/Freeze: Human Vulnerabilities**

### **Recognizing Symptoms of Exposure**

Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Frostbite is a reaction to cold that can cause permanent harm. Hypothermia occurs when the body's temperature drops below 95° Fahrenheit. Symptoms include:

- Confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and shivering are signs of hypothermia. If you experience any of these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.
- Gray, white or yellow skin discoloration, numbness or waxy skin are symptoms of frostbite. If you experience any of these symptoms, seek immediate medical attention.
- In the case of overexposure to freezing temperatures, remove wet clothing and immediately warm the body with a blanket or warm fluids like hot cider or soup. Avoid caffeine or alcohol.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance on warming procedures:
  - Get the victim into a warm room or shelter.
  - If the victim has on any wet clothing, remove it.
  - Warm the center of the body first – chest, neck, head and groin – using an electric blanket, if available; or use skin-to-skin contact under loose, dry layers of blankets, clothing, towels or sheets.
  - Warm beverages can help increase the body temperature, but do not give alcoholic beverages. Do not try to give beverages to an unconscious person.
  - After body temperature has increased, keep the person dry and wrapped in a warm blanket, including the head and neck.
  - Get medical attention as soon as possible.

### **Vulnerable Populations**

Situational and physical characteristics help to identify vulnerable populations that may not comfortably or safely access and use disaster resources. Specifically, when discussing extreme cold or freeze-related emergency preparedness, the following groups could be considered vulnerable or at greater risk in a cold emergency:

- Homeless
- Infants and small children under age five



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- Women who are pregnant
- Older adults
- Persons who have obesity
- Persons who are bedridden
- Persons with mental illness/disabilities
- Persons with cognitive disorders
- Persons with medical conditions (e.g., heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, insulin dependence)
- Persons requiring life-saving medications (e.g., for high blood pressure, depression, insomnia)
- Persons who utilize medical equipment (e.g., ventilators, oxygen, G-tubes)
- Individuals with drug or alcohol addictions
- Persons who use mobility devices (e.g., wheelchairs, walkers, canes)
- Persons who are non-ambulatory
- Those with sensory impairments (blind/visually impaired or deaf/hard of hearing)
- Persons who are under extreme working conditions
- Persons who are economically challenged
- Persons who are socially isolated
- Persons who do not speak English with minimal access to information

### People with Disabilities

Integrating people with disabilities and seniors into extreme cold/freezing emergency planning efforts, especially at a local level, will improve related services to vulnerable populations. In fact, it is essential that disability and senior service providers are partners in all disaster planning efforts. The following organizations provide services that may be useful for vulnerable populations during any emergency:

- County In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)
- IHSS public authority



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- Paratransit
- Dial a Ride
- Deaf/hearing impaired organizations
- Blind/visual impaired organizations
- Independent living centers
- Regional centers on developmental disabilities
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Adult Protective Services
- Meals-on-wheels
- Faith-based organizations
- Postal service
- Electric companies/other utility companies
- Animal control
- Community action agencies
- Rotary Club
- Lions/service organizations
- Masons
- Nursing homes
- Residential care facilities for the elderly
- Adult residential facilities
- Community colleges and universities with disability services programs
- Homeless shelters
- Food kitchens
- Local county food banks



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- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Health education training centers
- Private providers of services to people with disabilities

### **Using Registries**

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Local jurisdictions are encouraged to use existing disability and/or senior service registries instead of creating new registries. Information can be gleaned from a variety of sources, including the service providers noted above, to provide the comprehensive information necessary to inform emergency planning.

The use of voluntary registries has been a topic of discussion with state and local emergency planners and within the disability community. Some jurisdictions have developed pilot registries, but the majority of people with disabilities and seniors chose not participate. Jurisdictions must carefully consider the implications of establishing a registry. Specifically, implementation of a registry may be perceived as providing a local government “promise” or guarantee that the registrants will be provided with evacuation services. Jurisdictions should carefully consider the implications of such imputed promises. In addition, there may be a tendency by a jurisdiction to view those on the registry as the only ones who need assistance or to focus on the registrants first rather than looking at the population more broadly. Additionally, there are Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) considerations that must be factored into the development and deployment of registries, concerns related to maintenance of information on the registry (location information and medical information) and potential legal liabilities.

### **Transportation**

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The need to move people in an extreme cold/freezing emergency where power outage is a factor will most likely center on moving vulnerable populations to/from warming centers and/or medical facilities. Transporting under these circumstances can be very complex. Complications can be caused by a variety of factors including locating people that need to be transported, the medical condition of the individual, vehicle accessibility, pet and service animal issues, forced transport and liability issues.

Transportation providers linked via interagency agreements or other contractual arrangements with social service agencies could provide a valuable resource in time of emergencies and facilitate cost reimbursement for local agencies if a state and/or federal disaster is declared. These activities should be undertaken prior to any emergency in the preparedness phase of emergency management and included as a vital component in emergency plans and procedures.

County and local government may have variety of resources within their jurisdiction to use in the movement of people during an extreme cold/freezing event. Transportation service systems specifically for people with disabilities and older adults need to be integrated into all evacuation and warming center (sheltering) plans. Agreements should be developed between local governments and transportation providers in advance of an event, and should include crossing jurisdictions for mutual aid assistance. Disability and older adult transportation service



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providers should become routine partners in emergency planning. Agreements should be made with providers in advance of an event when possible. Resources for accessible transportation that may be available in an area may include:

- ADA-mandated paratransit systems/accessible transportation providers
- Dial a Ride
- Non-profits (i.e. United Cerebral Palsy)
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Private providers of services to people with disabilities
- Taxi systems
- Non-emergency vans, medical vans
- School district transportation systems
- Adult Day Health Care (ADHC)
- Airport shuttle buses/airport car rental shuttle buses
- Senior centers
- Health care centers



## **Appendix E: Extreme Cold/Freeze: Animal Vulnerabilities**

California does have its few days of record cold temperatures, with ice and snow in parts of the state. Animal owners should be aware and ready to protect their pets and livestock to help them through these unusual cold spells. Following are a number of concerns and recommendations.

### **Concerns**

- Our animals, especially indoor/outdoor pets, probably do not have an adequate winter coat for protection in these very low temperatures.
- Hypothermia and dehydration are the two most probable life-threatening conditions for animals in cold weather.
- Wet conditions and wind chill add greatly to the cold-stress for animals (and people).

### **Preventive actions to consider when the temperature is below freezing:**

#### **Pets**

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- Pets should be brought inside or into protected covered areas, provided with plenty of bedding, food and drinking water.

#### **Livestock**

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- Livestock should be provided with wind-break and roof shelter, and monitored for signs of discomfort (extensive shivering, weakness, lethargy, etc.).
- It is very important that livestock be provided extra hay/forage/feed as up to double the calories for normal body heat maintenance may be needed in extreme cold.
- It is critical that animals have access to drinking water. Usual water sources may freeze solid in low temperatures and dehydration becomes a life-threatening factor. Many of our animals, especially the young, may not know how or be unable to break several inches of ice to reach water. In general, animals tend to drink less in extreme cold, risking dehydration. Research with horses shows horses drink more water if it is warmed during winter weather.
- Adding a warm sloppy bran mash, sloppy moistened beet pulp or soaking pelleted feed in warm water is a good way to add water to your horses' diet and provide some "comfort food" in the cold weather.
- Special attention should be paid to very young and old animals. They may be less able to tolerate temperature extremes and have weaker immune systems.



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### **Response if needed**

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If you think your pet is suffering from the cold, including developing frostbite, consult your local practitioner for treatment advice.

Many professionals and organizations are available to assist you in recommendations and health care for your animals. Pet owners should check with their veterinarian, animal control or humane societies for additional tips and assistance. Horse and livestock owners should check with their veterinarian, the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Animal Health and Food Safety Services or their county agriculture extension agent for additional information and assistance. Please take the extra care to provide for your pets and livestock during a cold period.





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## Appendix F: Warming Center Checklist

The following is a list of suggested criteria for setting up a Warming Center. There are no established criteria for Warming Centers. Additionally, unless a special exemption has been given by the local utilities, facilities used as Warming Centers are not exempt from rotating blackouts.

### Important Criteria

Warming Center should be a pre-identified American Red Cross shelter site

Heating or equivalent (temperature maintained at a minimum of 68°)

Accessible to people with disabilities/ADA compliant

Ample seating appropriate to the jurisdiction

Public restrooms accessible to people with disabilities

Access to potable water (drinking fountain, etc.)

Access to 911 services (phone or payphone)

Publicly advertised

Parking access

Proximity to public transit

Need for Security

### Suggested Criteria

Back-up generators

Area for pets

Secure, facility has security service

Communications, phone (including TDD/TTY), internet access, sign-language interpreters

Child friendly with materials for children to play with while at the Cooling Center

Medical personnel such as nurses and/or aides

24-hour, 7 days a week operation

Large capacity



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Personnel assistance services for people with disabilities

Available televisions, books, games

Transportation for those lacking their own, including wheelchair accessible services

Follow-up procedures for those in need of additional services (health care, social services)

Adjacent pet housing resources available if needed



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### Appendix G: Definitions

**Community Based Organization:** or CBO means “a public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that:

- a. Is representative of a community or segments of a community; and
- b. Provides educational or related services to individuals in the community”

**Contingency Plan:** - Refers to a subset of an existing emergency plan focused on addressing the particulars of a specific emergency scenario (i.e., earthquake, flood, heat, cold/freeze, etc.).

**Warming Zones:** A Warming Zone is a location to get out of the cold/freeze for a period of time to let your body warm up. Warming Zone facilities may include libraries, community centers, malls, and senior centers. During a cold/freeze event, community and senior centers may extend hours into the evening to give citizens a longer period of respite.

**Warming Centers:** A Warming Center is a temporary warm public space set up by local authorities to deal with the health effects of extreme cold/freeze over an extended period of time. Usually sited at several locations throughout a city, Warming Centers are meant to prevent hypothermia, especially among the elderly without warming mechanisms at home. Warming Centers provide warmth, water, and sometimes medical attention, along with referrals to social services.

**Emergency Plans:** As defined in Government Code §8560 (a) "Emergency Plans" means those official and approved documents which describe the principles and method to be applied in carrying out emergency operations or rendering mutual aid during emergencies. These plans include such elements as continuity of government, the emergency services of governmental agencies, mobilization of resources, mutual aid, and public information.

**Faith Based Organization or FBO:** A religious-based organization that provides community services.

**Wind Chill Index:** The NWS Wind Chill Temperature (WCT) index uses advances in science, technology, and computer modeling to provide an accurate, understandable, and useful formula for calculating the dangers from winter winds and freezing temperatures

**Joint Information Center:** A centralized facility for coordinating an organized, integrated, release of critical emergency information, crisis communications and public affairs functions, which is timely, accurate, and consistent.

**Local Government:** As defined in SEMS regulations §2402 (m), " . . . means local agencies as defined in Government Code §8680.2 and special districts defined in California Code of Regulations, Title 19, §2900(y).”

**National Weather Service (NWS) Information:** Using the climate-region-specific criteria, if NWS forecasters predict for a given region an extreme temperature event, then the NWS will



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issue alerts in the form of a Special Weather Statement that is based on several criteria, including how far in advance of the event they are making the prediction.

**Operational Area:** As defined in Government Code §8559 (b), "An 'Operational Area' is an intermediate level of the state emergency services organization, consisting of a county and all political subdivisions within the county area."

**Rotating Blackout:** A process of cutting off service to selected customers for a predetermined period (usually not more than two hours) in order to retain the integrity of the power grid.

**Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS):** As defined in California Code of Regulations §2401, ". . . based upon the Incident Management System (ICS) adapted from the system originally developed by Firefighting Resources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies (FIRESCOPE) program including those currently in use by state agencies, the Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACs) as developed by FIRESCOPE program, the operational area concept, and the Master Mutual Aid Agreement and related mutual aid systems."



## Appendix H: Acronyms

Acronyms used throughout this plan and their full names are listed below as they appear in the document:

ADA	American Disabilities Act
BOS	Board of Supervisors
CAL-ISO	California Independent System Operator (for the electrical power grid)
Cal OES	California Office of Emergency Services
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CBO	Community Based Organization
CPUC	California Public Utility Commission
CSA	Community Services Agency (County)
DOC	Department Operations Center
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FBO	Faith Based Organization
HSA	Health Services Agency/Public Health (County)
ICS	Incident Command System
JIC	Joint Information Center
MHOAC	Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator
MID	Modesto Irrigation District
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NWS	National Weather Service
OA	Operational Area
OID	Oakdale Irrigation District



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OES	Office of Emergency Services (County)
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric
PIO	Public Information Office (Officer)
REOC	Cal OES Regional Emergency Operations Center (Coastal, Inland, Southern)
SEMS	Standardized Emergency Management System
StanMAC	Stanislaus Multi-Agency Coordination
TID	Turlock Irrigation District