

January 2, 2008

Community urged to use caution in cold weather conditions

A predicted drop in temperatures to below freezing levels has Sarasota County Emergency Management officials reminding residents to be prepared and use caution both indoors and outside. "Temperatures are projected to drop below freezing overnight, particularly in inland areas. It is important that the community prepare for colder than usual conditions by taking precautions to protect their homes, families and pets," stressed Sarasota County Emergency Management Chief Ed McCrane.

Plants should be brought inside or covered to avoid damage from frost. Pets should not be left outside during the cold weather. The lower than normal temperatures combined with strong winds could produce a dangerous wind chill. Citizens who need to be outside overnight or during the early morning hours are encouraged to dress in warm layers and limit skin exposure to the wind. The Salvation Army headquarters located at 1400 10th Street in Sarasota will be open for those seeking shelter from the cold.

Citizens going to the beach should avoid the rough surf and be aware of a high risk of strong rip tides. In addition, the dry air and winds can generate critical fire weather conditions. Citizens are advised to use caution when heating their homes as the risk of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning increases due to the improper use of heating devices. "Never use propane or gas heaters indoors and be sure that electric space heaters are free from obstructions and are not located where they can be knocked over by children or pets. Always keep all flammable objects away any heating devices," said McCrane

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Emergency Management at 941-861-5000 or visit the National Weather Services Web site at weather.gov