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Residents advised to use caution in cold weather conditions

With a freeze warning issued by the National Weather Service for Monday evening, Dec. 27, Sarasota County Emergency Management officials are urging residents to exercise caution in dealing with the cold conditions. In addition, shelters in both northern and southern Sarasota County will be open Monday evening through Tuesday morning.

“Temperatures are projected to drop rapidly overnight below freezing in all but the coastal areas. It is important that the community prepare for colder than usual conditions by preparing their homes, families and pets,” said Sarasota County Emergency Management Chief Ed McCrane.

The open shelters are:

- The Salvation Army headquarters at 1400 Tenth St., Sarasota. The Salvation Army needs coat and blanket donations due to the cold weather conditions.
- Christ Lutheran Church, 701 N. Indiana Ave., Englewood, which is provided by the Southwest Florida Chapter American Red Cross, Just Neighbors of Englewood and St. David’s Episcopal Church.

McCrane said people should take immediate action to protect their plants by covering or bringing them inside. Pets also should be brought inside during this period of cold weather. Temperatures could produce dangerous wind chills and people venturing outside overnight and in the early morning hours should dress in several warm layers and limit exposure to the wind, he added.

Minor beach erosion may occur and beach users should avoid the rough surf and be aware of a high risk of riptides. The dry air and winds could generate critical fire weather conditions as well.

The risk of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning also increases during very cold weather due to the improper use of heating devices, so extreme caution is advised. Never use propane or gas heaters indoors, emergency management officials advise, and be sure that electric space heaters are free from obstructions and are not located where they can be knocked over. Also, keep all flammable objects away from any heating devices.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center 941-861-5000 or click the All Hazards button on www.scgov.net.

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