

Cold weather alert for Lake Tahoe Basin

By Tracy Sheldon

The National Weather Service in Reno is forecasting low temperatures in the days ahead.

Starting Dec. 5, a strong high pressure will build over the area resulting in a prolonged period of strong morning inversions which will be very cold. This pattern will likely last through this weekend and may negatively impact air quality.

Monday night there will be strong east ridge winds. Gusts to 80 mph will likely result in very cold wind chills. Some of these winds will flow down into the area creating boating and tree-fall hazards. Many of our trees are not accustomed to east/northeast wind directions.

As temperatures drop this winter, the American Red Cross offers 10 steps people can take to stay safe during cold weather:

- **Layer up.** Wear layers of lightweight clothing to stay warm. Gloves and a hat will help prevent losing your body heat.
- **Don't forget your furry friends.** Bring pets indoors. If they can't come inside, make sure they have enough shelter to keep them warm and that they can get to unfrozen water.
- **Remember the three foot rule.** If you are using a space heater, place it on a level, hard surface and keep anything flammable (things such as paper, clothing, bedding, curtains or rugs) at least three feet away.
- **Requires supervision.** Turn off space heaters and make sure fireplace embers are out before leaving the room or

going to bed.

- **Don't catch fire.** If you are using a fireplace, use a glass or metal fire screen large enough to catch sparks and rolling logs.
- **Protect your pipes.** Run water, even at a trickle, to help prevent your pipes from freezing. Open the kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals out of the reach of children. Keep the garage doors closed if there are water lines in the garage.
- **Better safe than sorry.** Keep the thermostat at the same temperature day and night. Your heating bill may be a little higher, but you could avoid a more costly repair job if your pipes freeze and burst.
- **The kitchen is for cooking.** Never use a stove or oven to heat your home.
- **Use generators outside.** Never operate a generator inside the home, including in the basement or garage.
- **Knowledge is power.** Don't hook a generator up to the home's wiring. The safest thing to do is to connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator.

We strongly encourage you to sign up for the **emergency alert**, text messaging service which is part of the city's comprehensive emergency notification system. Whether you live in the city limits or the county, sign up now for **reverse 911**.

Tracy Sheldon works for the city of South Lake Tahoe.