

KSFM 2025 - 001 - KSFM Prevention Information Release

To: Kansas Healthcare Facilities

Date: 01/03/2025

Subject: Cold Weather Preparedness

Each winter, Kansans can count on at least one major winter storm. KSFM would like to remind facilities that while resident or patient safety is always top priority, facilities must also remain in compliance with CMS and Life Safety Code Requirements. When extreme cold conditions are forecast, take the time to review your Emergency Preparedness plan. Make sure that all information is up to date and ensure that all staff are prepared and know what actions to take during an emergency.

Sprinkler Systems

One of the biggest issues facing facilities during extreme cold, is the sprinkler pipes freezing. 2011 NFPA 25 *Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*, 4.1.1.1 states "The building owner shall ensure that all areas of the building containing water-filled piping shall be maintained at a minimum temperature of 40° F (4.4° C) and not exposed to freezing conditions." Draining the sprinkler system and conducting a fire watch is not an acceptable solution to avoid freezing pipes.

If your sprinkler system does freeze, you must begin fire watch immediately upon discovery. Be sure to follow your fire watch policy for notifications. If this is outside of normal business hours, you can send a notification email to prevention@ks.gov. Please be sure to include the name of your facility, location, reason you are beginning fire watch, and contact information for KSFM to follow up when we are back in the office.

Heat

The other problem facing facilities during extreme cold temperatures is maintaining heat in the building. The use of space heaters is very limited in healthcare facilities. 2010 NFPA 101, *Life Safety Code*, 18.7.8/19.7.8 states "Portable space-heating devices shall be prohibited in all health care occupancies, unless both of the following criteria are met: (1) Such devices are used only in non-sleeping staff and employee areas. (2) The heating elements of such devices do not exceed 212° F (100° C). If your facility's furnace or boiler is unable to maintain minimum required temperatures, follow your extreme cold plan in your Emergency Preparedness policies. If you evacuate your facility, please notify KSFM at your earliest convenience.

Loss of Power

If power is lost due to wind or ice, you will need to implement your power outage policy. If your facility has a

(continue to page 2)

backup generator, follow your shelter-in-place policies. Be sure to monitor life safety systems to ensure that they continue to function as intended. If you must evacuate your facility, please notify KSFM at your earliest convenience.

One last thing to keep in mind; activation of your Emergency Preparedness plan for an actual emergency counts as the annual full-scale exercise that is required by CMS regulations. Document all actions taken during the event and conduct your after-action review to identify things that went well and things that need improvement.

For questions and to assist you in complying with the requirements, the KSFM has a section on its website devoted to Emergency Preparedness.

Please visit www.firemarshal.ks.gov. In the “Resources” section, select Health, and then Emergency Preparedness.

###