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Philadelphia Corporation for Aging is a non-profit organization established in 1973 to serve as the Area Agency on Aging for Philadelphia. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for Philadelphians who are older or who have disabilities and to assist them in achieving optimum levels of health, independence and productivity. PCA receives its funds, in part, from the Older Americans Act, Medical Assistance and the Pennsylvania Lottery, all through the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.



642 North Broad Street • Philadelphia, PA 19130-3409

Administration: 215-765-9000 • Fax: 215-765-9066

PCA Helpline: 215-765-9040 or 215-765-9041 (Hearing Impaired)

www.pcaCares.org

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Helping you keep warm this winter season.

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This booklet provides tips and resources to help keep you warm through this long winter season.

Understanding Cold Stress

The elderly population is disproportionately affected by hypothermia (commonly known as cold stress), caused by excessive body heat loss and exposure to cold. Those who don't dress warmly enough; live in a cold room or house; lack shelter from the snow, rain, wind, and water; eat poorly and take certain prescription medications* are at risk for cold stress. Cold stress can happen indoors, even at temperatures as mild as 60°- 70°F. Protect yourself and your loved ones this winter by learning about cold stress and following these simple guidelines:

Symptoms of Cold Stress:

- Sleepiness (difficulty waking up)
- Confusion
- Slurred speech
- Lack of coordination
- Uncontrolled shivering
- Weak, slow pulse
- Slow breathing
- Puffy face
- Cold, stiff muscles
- Trembling of one side of the body or in one arm or leg
- Change in behavior or personality

* If taking medication for high blood pressure, nervousness, poor circulation, depression, or sleeplessness, discuss hypothermia/cold stress with your doctor.

How to Reduce your Risk of Cold Stress:

- Stay warm and dry, indoors and outdoors
- Avoid exposure to snow, wind, rain and water/dampness
- Dress warmly
- Wear loose layers of clothing, especially woolens
- Cover head and neck (wear a hat and scarf)
- Wear gloves or mittens
- Change socks and long underwear if they become damp or wet
- Wear warm shoes and socks
- Keep skin and clothing dry to lessen the chance of frostbite
- Eat nutritious meals on a regular basis, especially a hot meal
- Drink a lot of fluids

What to do in an Emergency:

DO call 9-1-1 for medical assistance
DO cover head and neck
DO wrap in blankets, towels, extra clothes, or newspaper
DO handle the person gently
DO warm the person gradually
DO take off wet clothes and provide warm, dry clothing

What not to do in an Emergency:

DO NOT give hot drinks or hot food
DO NOT give alcohol or medications
DO NOT bathe or shower
DO NOT rub or massage arms or legs

Tips for Weathering Winter

Poor insulation, drafty windows and clogged furnace filters are just a few of the things that can drive up winter heating bills and raise the risk of developing hypothermia or cold stress. Weatherization, which protects homes against cold winter weather, can help solve these problems and keep you warm and dry this winter. The following weatherization guidelines can help reduce heating costs and improve energy efficiency in your home.

Weatherizing Your Home:

- Inspect for cracks or air leaks around doors, windows, fireplaces, vents and electrical outlets
- Seal with caulk, weather-stripping or plastic
- Install storm windows and/or doors
- Make sure doors fit snugly, and are weather-stripped
- Repair any cracked glass, loose putty and leaky faucets
- Add insulation to unheated areas such as attics, basements, crawl spaces and areas around the garage
- Keep thermostats between 68 and 70 degrees and lower the heat when not at home
- Add extra blankets to the bed while sleeping
- Open drapes to let in sunlight during the day
- Close drapes at night (insulated drapes help prevent heat loss)
- Close the doors to unheated spaces and rooms
- Get furnace inspected annually and replace filters often
- Use kitchen and bath ventilating fans sparingly – they can blow away a houseful of warm air in no time
- Place a sheet of aluminum foil between the radiator and any cold wall to reflect heat back into the room
- Adjust heat registers to direct air flow across floor, allowing the warm air to rise
- Clean heat registers, baseboard heaters and radiators regularly – do not block with furniture, carpeting or drapes
- Set hot water heater temperature to 120 degrees

Conserve Energy to Save Money:

Reducing energy usage by 10% can save \$60 to \$240 each year. Here are some no-cost tips to help lower energy bills.

- **Laundry** – Wash only full loads and use cold water. Clean the dryer's lint filter after each load. Hang clothes to dry, when possible.

- **Kitchen** – Run dishwasher only when full and manually air-dry dishes or use auto-dry feature. Don't preheat oven unless necessary. Thaw frozen foods before cooking. Adjust refrigerator settings to 37 to 40 degrees F and limit opening/closing of door.
- **Lighting** – Use task lighting, instead of lighting an entire room. Take advantage of natural daylight when possible and decorate with lighter colors to reflect light.
- **Water** – Low-flow showerheads and faucets can reduce the amount of water used per day by half.
- **Heating** – Turn your thermostat down 5 to 7 degrees, when you go out or to sleep. Use ceiling fans with the blades reversed to draw warm air down into room.



Nearly **132,000** Philadelphia seniors, or 53%, own homes which are more than 60 years old, and are difficult to heat due to poor insulation, inefficient furnaces and drafty windows.

Where to Find Help:

The first step in getting help is knowing where to find it. Here's who to contact.

Community Legal Services (CLS)

215-227-2400 • www.clsphila.org

CLS Elderly Law Project specializes in helping seniors overcome some of the unique problems faced by people over 60, including issues related to energy assistance.

Crisis Program

Crisis is federally funded to help low-income households in a heating crisis. For information, call the PCA Helpline at **215-765-9040**.

Energy Coordinating Agency (ECA)

215-988-0929 • www.ecasavesenergy.org

ECA is a non-profit corporation that coordinates and provides energy services – including conservation, heater repair, energy education and bill payment assistance programs – for low- and moderate-income Philadelphians.

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

215-560-1583

This federal program helps low-income people pay for primary or secondary heating costs. Available once a year for homeowners or renters.

PCA Helpline

215-765-9040 • www.pcaCares.org

The PCA Helpline provides a wealth of information, help, education, energy assistance programs and other community resources.

PECO Customer Assistance Program (CAP)

1-800-774-7040

CAP Rate offers a discount on the first 650 kWh of electric usage for low-income households (those at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines), and who are having difficulty making payments.

PECO Low-Income Usage Reduction Program (LIURP)

1-800-675-0222 • www.pecosmartideas.com

Free conservation/education program for low-income customers helps reduce energy consumption by installing weatherizing measures and offering energy-saving tips.

PGW Conservation & Customer Responsibility Program (CRP)

215-684-6100 • www.pgworks.com

PGW offers this customer assistance program to help low-income customers afford and maintain gas service.

Philadelphia Water Department Water Revenue Assistance Program (WRAP)

215-686-6880

WRAP provides cash assistance from the city of up to \$200 to help low-income customers (those at or below 175% of poverty level) pay delinquent water bills.

SeniorLAW Center

1-877-PA SR LAW (727-7529)

www.seniorlawcenter.org

Provides free legal services/information for Philadelphia seniors in need, with a focus on utility and housing issues including: wrongful utility shutoffs, utility contracts and warranties, home repair and contractor fraud, financial exploitation, deed issues, mortgage disputes, evictions, and tenants' rights.

Stay Warm PA Initiative

1-866-550-4355 • www.StayWarmPA.com

State program to keep Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens warm and safe as cold weather approaches and homeowner energy bills are expected to jump as much as 48 percent.

Temple Elderly Law Project

215-204-6887

Provides free energy-related and general assistance and referral services to persons 60 and over.

Utility Emergency Services Fund (UESF)

215-972-5170 • www.uesfacts.org

Privately funded, UESF helps people who have exhausted all other public sources of funding for gas, electric and water utility bills.

Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation Weatherization Program

215-448-2160

www.phdchousing.org/weatherize.htm

Provides free weatherizing and energy efficiency improvements to homeowners and renters.

For more information, please call the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) Helpline at 215-765-9040 or visit KeepSeniorsWarm.org for a complete, up-to-date resource list.

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