

**Governor Rell: State Agencies Issue ‘Shelter Alert’
To Shelters, Local Emergency Officials & Others**
Encourages Residents to Call the 2-1-1 Infoline if Need to Find Shelter

Governor M. Jodi Rell today directed Commissioner Michael Starkowski of the Department of Social Services (DSS) and Commissioner Peter Boynton of the Department of Emergency Management Homeland Security (DEMHS) to issue a statewide “Weekend Shelter Alert” as a statewide effort to local shelters, police departments, fire departments and other organizations in anticipation of the bitterly cold temperatures forecasted for this weekend.

Also at the Governor’s request today, DSS contacted the 2-1-1 Infoline to make certain there is a special coordinated effort in place this weekend so 2-1-1 can continue to act as a clearinghouse to ensure shelter space is found for those who need it.

“The frigid weather predicted this weekend is public safety issue for those in need of shelter and heat. The organizations and local emergency officials that DSS and DEMHS will be contacting are critical partners in helping to protect the most vulnerable individuals,” said Governor Rell.

“The 2-1-1 Infoline is available for people who need help and for local shelters that need referral information when they stretch capacity limits. Infoline provides an incredibly important service to the people of Connecticut and I encourage everyone to take advantage of the help that is available to them.

“All of us can do our part too as we head into this weekend by checking on our elderly neighbors and reminding family and friends to make sure their loved ones stay warm this winter,” said Governor Rell.

Latest forecasts from DEMHS for tonight show lows ranging from the single digits in the northwest and northeast hills, the mid-teens in the central part of the state and 20 degrees along the coast. The forecast for the rest of the weekend shows temperatures ranging from single digits to the low 20s throughout the state.

On Wednesday, DEMHS and DSS held a meeting with state agencies, shelter providers and other community stakeholders to reinforce communications between and among state agencies, shelter providers and partners such as the United Way of Connecticut’s 2-1-1 Infoline, the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

Cold weather and heating safety tips:

Cold Weather Safety Tips:

- Wear several layers of not too tight or too bulky clothing. Always wear a hat and gloves.
- Consume hot and easily digestible food and beverages with higher calories, like hot milk, soup, noodles and rice.
- Remain indoors or in places with sunlight. Continue with usual daily activities, but do more exercise to generate heat, improve blood circulation and maintain flexibility of joints.
- Exercise care and concern for the elderly. If you happen to know of a single elder living alone or with chronic illnesses, give him/her a call or pay a visit.

Heating Safety Tips:

- Do not burn anything larger than candles inside your home without providing good ventilation to the outside.
- Any type of heater (except electric) should be vented.
- Do not use a gas or electric oven or surface units for heating a room.
- Do not burn outdoor barbecue materials such as charcoal briquettes inside— even in a fireplace.
- Do not use bottled gas in natural gas appliances unless appliances have been converted for that use
- Use battery-operated smoke and carbon monoxide detectors