



Police Department

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The CCSU Police Department wants you to be safe this winter as the threat of severe weather is upon us. Attending college in New England is both beautiful and challenging. Wearing appropriate clothing and taking precautions against the weather during all seasons is just as important. Mostly, this comes down to common sense. Below are a few tips for staying smart in the cold.

Check the weather.

Winter can bring any number of weather surprises, from freezing rain to sleet to heavy accumulating snow. Freezing rain occurs when the precipitation falls as rain through relatively warm air and then freezes upon impact with cold surfaces. Sleet is similar; water falls as rain through relatively warm air, then refreezes before it hits the ground and impacts as ice. Snow doesn't change form as it falls; it is always frozen. Any form of winter precipitation can lead to slick roads and dangerous driving conditions.

As we prepare for the first major storm of the 2022 season, decide where you will be during the storm and stay there throughout the duration. Limit driving and walking on public roadways and untreated areas, limiting the potential of a fall, frostbite, or hypothermia. Furthermore, freezing rain or heavy snow can weigh down electric lines, which may snap under the added weight, leading to power outages and dangerous downed wires. If there is precipitation at all and you need to go outside, protect yourself with waterproof boots and a waterproof or water-resistant coat, as well as gloves, a hat, and a scarf. Also, wearing reflective clothing assists with visibility during weather events and darkness.

It's important that you also pay attention to the wind chill, which is how cold it feels. Wind chill temperatures are generally lower than the actual air temperature, because blowing wind makes you feel colder. It is sometimes referred to as the "real feel" or "feels like" temperature. If you check the weather and it says that it is 40° F, but the wind chill is 25° F, dress for the colder weather!

If there is a storm headed in your direction, you may discover that the National Weather Service has issued a winter weather advisory, a winter storm watch, a winter storm warning, or a blizzard warning (listed from least to most severe). A winter weather advisory just means that you should be on the lookout for winter weather (snow, cold, frost, etc.), but it isn't likely to cause more than an inconvenience. A winter storm watch indicates that winter weather is expected and there's a chance that it could significantly affect the area. A winter storm warning indicates that winter weather is imminent, and you should take immediate action to prepare for heavy snowfall and icy conditions. A blizzard warning is issued when not only will there be heavy snowfall, but also high winds. If there is a winter storm warning or a blizzard warning, get indoors and know what to do or where to go should the power go out.

Beware of ice.

It just takes one wrong step on the ice to fall and injure yourself. Take care when walking on the ice, though you should avoid it if possible. Snow provides more traction, though if you don't know how deep the snow is, it can be a hazard on its own. If you live in a dorm, apartment or home with a personal outdoor staircase or walkway, be sure to confirm your footing before venturing out. Here on campus,

Facilities Management does a great job of preparing the varied surfaces for travel. Give them time and room to work.

Wear multiple layers of loose-fitting clothing.

Instead of wearing one long-sleeved tee shirt and a pair of jeans, layer your clothing to provide warmth and insulation. There are many cold weather options that are still stylish. Layers, though, are your best bet in the winter; they trap warm air between them, thereby keeping you warmer for longer. Make sure you also are wearing the proper footwear. Insulated and waterproof boots, not sneaker type athletic style shoes or open-toed heels, are going to keep you warmest in the winter. If it's snowing or precipitating in any way, wear a waterproof jacket on top of everything else. Being wet and cold is not only miserable but can lead to hypothermia and frostbite.

Be aware that drinking alcohol will make you feel artificially warm.

You may feel warm after a couple of drinks, but your blood vessels dilate when you're drinking, and you lose heat faster than you would otherwise. More blood flowing through your veins means that more blood is nearer to the surface of your skin, which is where you'll lose the most heat. Your skin may even feel warm to the touch, but your internal organs will lose heat to your skin and the cool air if you don't take care to protect yourself. So, even if you've had a few drinks and the next party isn't that far away, wear a jacket. You don't want to get frostbite or hypothermia. Alcohol also relaxes your inhibitions and contributes to increased clumsiness. If you decide to walk home from a bar, you may underestimate how long you'll experience the cold conditions, possibly resulting in hypothermia. Alcohol could also lead to injuries that you wouldn't have gotten if you were trying to trudge home through the snow sober instead of tipsy. This is especially dangerous as most of CCSU's local bars are on busy roadways.

Stay hydrated.

Staying hydrated is just as important in the winter as it is in the summer, especially if you participate in winter sports (skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, etc.). Though you may not feel like you're sweating, you still lose water when you physically exert yourself (sweat just skips the liquid stage and goes straight into water vapor), and you could end up dehydrated if you don't replenish your fluids.

Staying hydrated can keep you warmer, too. If you are well hydrated, your blood is taking up more volume in your body. The more blood you have, the longer it will take to cool. Hydration, then, may help prevent frostbite.

Wear sunglasses.

The sun may not be as warm or long-lasting as it is in the summer, but its rays are just as harmful to your eyes (and skin) in the winter. While this is especially important if there is snow or ice on the ground (the white reflects a large portion of the rays back up to eye level), it's important on any clear day that you plan to spend time outside. If you plan on skiing, sledding, or otherwise participating in winter sports, beware of snow blindness. This painful condition occurs when your corneas get sunburned after exposure to the sun's rays or their reflection. Save yourself the suffering and invest in a good pair of sunglasses or ski goggles.

Learn how to drive in the snow.

You won't learn how-to drive-in winter conditions overnight and you won't really learn until you've done it more than once, but you should learn the basics of winter driving ahead of time so that you don't get caught in a storm without knowing what to do. It's important to keep your car in top shape for winter driving: properly inflated tires, a full tank of gas (to prevent water vapor in your gas line from freezing), and functioning lights and windshield wipers. If you live on campus here at CCSU, check your vehicle

regularly in the parking garage. It's easy to forget about your vehicle for weeks at a time and this will affect its reliability.

When you need to go out, practice cautious, slow driving. Speeding up and slowing down abruptly can lead to skidding and will take longer in wet, snowy conditions than on a normal day. For that reason, you should keep your distance from the vehicle in front of you and start slowing down well in advance of stop signs or traffic lights; you don't want to end up rear-ending anyone just because you were in a hurry. Hills, also, can be tricky in the snow. You don't want to stop while you're on a hill, because slick conditions can lead to you sliding one way or another. You also don't want to go too quickly; you might lose traction on your way up the hill if you hit the gas, and you don't know what conditions await on the downslope. Always drive with your lights on in snowy, rainy, or stormy conditions, regardless of the time of day. Again, we recommend deciding where you are going to stay and safely wait out the storm in safe shelter before travelling.

Protect your head and extremities.

You lose a lot of heat through your head and mouth, so wear a hat and cover up your face with a scarf. Noses, ears, fingers, and toes are also particularly prone to frostbite in cold weather. Wear wool socks and waterproof, wool- or synthetic-lined boots. Mittens are warmer than gloves, and a hat that covers your ears is going to keep you warmer than a pair of earmuffs.

Treatment

Treatment for frostbite first involves getting away from freezing conditions. If you suspect that you have frostbite and are in a warm area, you can gently rewarm the affected body parts. Do not immerse them in hot water; you will burn yourself. If your frostbite is mild, you may experience pain as the tissue is rewarmed. If you develop blisters on the skin, if you remain in pain after the tissue has returned to body temperature, or if you never regain feeling in the affected area, go to the emergency room.

These basic safety tips and reminders can help you to safely adjust to changing winter weather. The CCSU Police Department is here for you around the clock to provide a safe and secure environment.

Enjoy the winter season in a safe and responsible manner.