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For immediate release

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Winter Weather Safety

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) knows residents will likely face winter weather conditions in the coming weeks. Winter weather can vary from light snow and freezing temperatures to a wind-driven blizzard that can leave a region paralyzed for several days. Storms may knock out power or communications and may put a strain on emergency responders' ability to reach those in need of help. Being prepared and exercising caution during winter weather will help ease the burden on emergency services.

Before bad weather approaches, gather a few items that you may need specifically for winter weather such as rock salt for walkways, snow shovels, clothing and blankets to keep warm, and enough fuel for your heating source (furnace, wood-burning stove, etc). It is also a good idea to have a national weather radio or to follow your local weather authority's social media platforms so you can stay up to date and alerted to changing weather conditions.

SWNPHD encourages residents to become familiar with the weather alert terminology to prepare in advance of any pending storms. The National Weather Service uses the following terms:

- **Winter Weather Advisory** – Potentially dangerous winter weather is happening or is expected in the next 12 to 36 hours. Travel may be difficult.
- **Winter Storm Warning** – Dangerous winter weather is happening or is expected in the next 12 to 36 hours. There will be considerable travel problems.
- **Blizzard Warning** – Severe winter weather is happening or expected in the next 12 to 36 hours, including whiteout conditions. Do not travel.

“When winter weather is expected, minimize travel as much as possible,” states Kay Schmidt, Emergency Response Coordinator for SWNPHD. “If you must go out, have an emergency supply kit in your vehicle and let someone know where you are headed and when you expect to get there.”

Please reach out to Kay at 308-345-4223 for further assistance in your preparedness efforts. More information on how to prepare for winter weather can be found at Ready.gov and by downloading the FEMA app for disaster resources, weather alerts, and safety tips.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Visit swhealth.ne.gov for information on preparedness. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook and can be reached by calling 308-345-4223.

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