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## **Cold weather injuries such as hypothermia and frostbite can be prevented by following a few simple precautions.**

### **HOW COLD IS TOO COLD TO ALLOW STUDENTS TO PLAY OUTDOORS?**

During typical winter days, common sense requires us to look beyond a specific temperature and consider factors such as wind chill, whether the ground is frozen or the sun is shining, how well the children are prepared to play outdoors (jackets, gloves, and hats), what activity the children are participating in, and the length of time to be spent outside. Deciding when students may play outdoors remains the responsibility of the principal, based on his or her professional judgment after considering the information provided in this fact sheet. Principals should communicate with their community that it is the intention of the school to hold recess during cold spells and that parents should have their children prepared to play outdoors (jackets, gloves, and hats).

Principal's should limit outdoor activities during National Weather Service (NWS) issued Wind Chill Advisories and Wind Chill Warnings. During a NWS Wind Chill Advisory, principals should limit to no more than fifteen (15) minutes for any outdoor activity. During a NWS Wind Chill Warning, principals should not allow any outdoor activity. Outdoor activity includes general and physical education classes, recess, and scheduled fire drills. This does not include students walking to and from school, students waiting at bus stops, student patrols or staff related outdoor duties before, during, or after the school day. All staff and students shall exit the building during an activation of the fire alarm system.

**Wind Chill Advisory is issued by the NWS when the wind chill temperature is expected to fall between -5F and -20F.**

**Wind Chill Warning is issued by the NWS when the Wind chill temperature is expected to fall to or below -20 F (for 3 hours).**

### **WHAT IS WIND CHILL?**

Wind chill is the human perception of temperature created by the combination of the actual temperature and the additional heat loss from exposed skin caused by the wind. This is how cold it "feels" outside (the apparent temperature). The higher the wind speed and the lower the temperature, the greater the wind chill effect.

If the actual air temperature is 40°F and the wind speed is 10 miles per hour (mph), the apparent temperature is 34°F; at 30°F with a 10-mph wind speed, the apparent temperature is 21°F.

Wind chill information resources include the [NWS Wind Chill Calculator](#) on the NWS website or the NWS wind chill chart can be found on the next page.

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**For more information, please contact the Office of Safety and Security at 571.423.2010.**

## HOW DO I GET DETAILED INFORMATION ON CURRENT LOCAL WEATHER CONDITIONS?

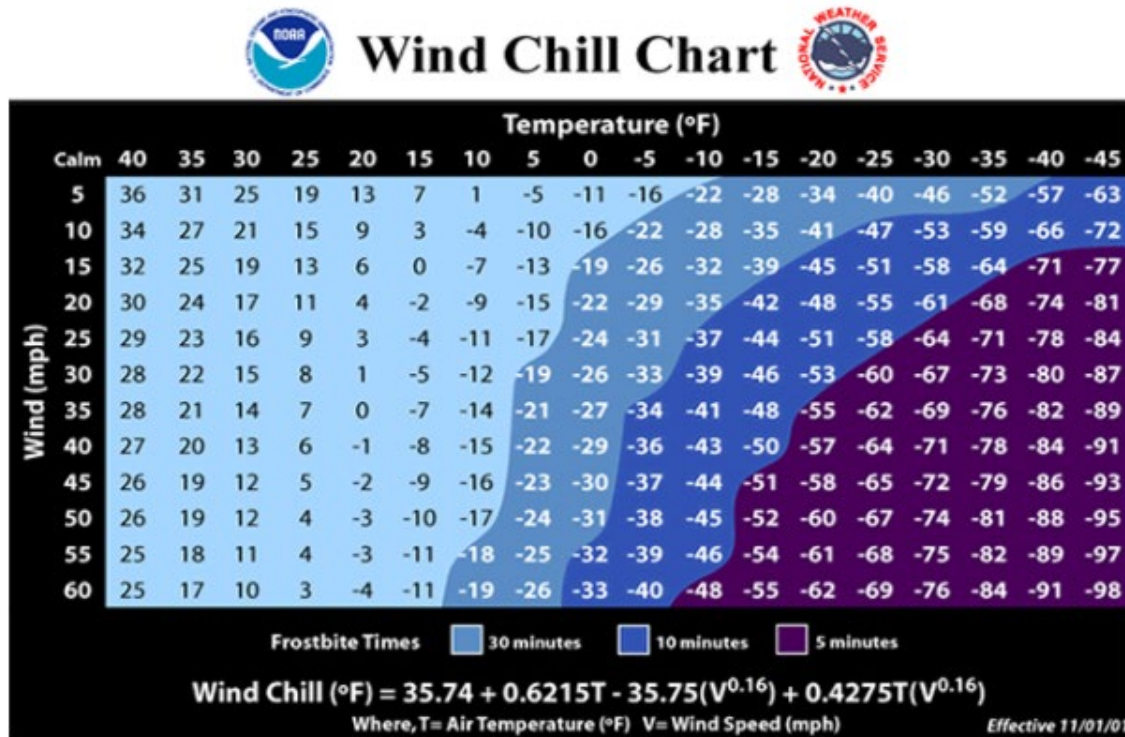


Image of the NWS Wind Chill Chart

The best source of local weather information is a weather radio. Regional information is available from radio and television broadcasts. Current weather information is also available from the National Weather Service, and the [Weather Channel](#). Of course, if your school participates in the 4-Winds network or similar reporting network, accurate local information is already available to you.

## WHAT IS WEATHER RADIO?

NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information direct from a nearby National Weather Service office. NWR broadcasts National Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts, and other hazard information 24 hours a day.

Working with the Federal Communications Commission's new emergency alert system, NWR is an "all hazards" radio network, making it the single source for the most comprehensive weather and emergency information available to the public. NWR also broadcasts warning and post-event information for all types of hazards--both natural (such as earthquakes and volcano activity) and technological (such as chemical releases or oil spills). NWR requires a special radio receiver or scanner capable of picking up the signal. Broadcasts in the Fairfax County area are found in the public service band at 162.550 MHz (call KHB 36).

For more information regarding weather radios, please refer to the OSS Weather Radio Fact Sheet.

**For more information, please contact the Office of Safety and Security at 571.423.2010.**