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News Release NEWS RELEASE

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Red Cross Offers Tips on How to Stay Warm during Frigid Temperatures

Corpus Christi, January 5, 2010 – Bone chilling temperatures have gripped much of the country, and the American Red Cross urges everyone to be safe and prepare as much as possible.

Many are looking to cut down on expenses when temperatures drop and home-heating costs rise. There is usually an increase in home fires at this time of year because of the use of candles and space heaters. We have steps people can follow to reduce their risk of starting a fire in their home, and still cut down on their heating bills.

HEAT YOUR HOME SAFELY

- All heaters need space! Keep things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment, fireplaces and stoves.
- Place portable space heaters on a hard, level, nonflammable surface. Do not put space heaters on rugs or carpets, near bedding or drapes, and keep children and pets away. Look for a model that shuts off automatically if the space heater tips over. Do not use heating equipment to dry wet clothing.
- Never use the stove or oven to heat your home.
- Never leave portable heaters, wood burning stoves or fireplaces unattended. Turn them off before leaving or going to bed.
- Keep the fire in the fireplace by using a glass or metal screen large enough to catch sparks and rolling logs.

CUT DOWN ON YOUR HEATING BILLS

- Eliminate drafts. Use either insulating tape or caulking strips to surround windows and door moldings. Cover your windows with plastic sheeting. If you have storm windows or storm doors, get them up to keep the cold out.
- Make sure heat vents aren't blocked by furniture.
- Turn down the thermostat.
- Close off any rooms that aren't in use and close heat vents or turn off radiators in those rooms.
- Insulate your light switch and outlet plates with foam pads. Cold air can seep into the house through them.
- Use heavy curtains to keep cold air out. Open them during the day to let the sun help warm your home and close them at night. Use fabric snakes or old carpets in front of windows and doors to help eliminate drafts.
- Turn off vent fans in the kitchen and bathroom when they are no longer needed.
- Set ceiling fans to blow air down.

DON'T FORGET FIDO AND YOUR NEIGHBOR

- Dress in several layers of lightweight clothing. Don't forget gloves or mittens, and a hat, preferably one that covers your ears.
- Wear waterproof, insulated boots to keep feet warm and dry and to maintain footing in ice and snow.
- Don't forget pets – bring them indoors. If that's not possible, provide adequate shelter to keep them warm and make sure they can get to unfrozen water.
- Check on people who require special assistance such as elderly people living alone, people with disabilities and children.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross is a humanitarian organization, led by volunteers, that provides relief to victims of disaster and helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit www.cbtreddcross.org