



# MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Don't Ignore Extreme Cold Warnings St. John Ambulance Wants People to be Aware of the Danger of Hypothermia

**January 17, 2011 (Toronto, ON)** – With a province wide extreme cold warning in effect St. John Ambulance would like to remind Ontarians of the very real danger of Hypothermia. It is easy for people to suspect hypothermia when the mercury has dipped well below zero, but it is important to keep in mind people can suffer from hypothermia in temperatures as high as 15°C. There are three stages of hypothermia people should be aware of mild, moderate and severe;

Sign	Mild	Moderate	Severe
<b>Pulse</b>	Normal	Slow and Weak	Weak, irregular, or absent
<b>Breathing</b>	Normal	Slow and Shallow	Slow or Absent
<b>Appearance</b>	Shivering, Slurred Speech	Shivering violently, clumsy, stumbling, pupils dilated, Skin bluish	Shivering has stopped
<b>Mental State</b>	Conscious but withdrawn or disinterested	Confused, sleepy, irrational	Unconscious

The symptoms of hypothermia are often confused for drunkenness, stroke or drug abuse. If you suspect someone is suffering from hypothermia get medical help immediately.

- Cover exposed Skin with suitable clothing or covers; make sure the head is well insulated.
- Adjust the casualty's clothing to keep the wind of drafts out. Wrap the casualty in something windproof – reflective "space blankets" and plastic garbage bags are good for this.
- If possible, move the casualty out of the cool or cold environment. If you cannot move indoors, protect the casualty from the wind.
- Wet clothing causes severe heat loss. If you are in a shelter and have a dry change of clothes, gently replace wet clothes with dry ones. If you are not in a shelter, place the dry clothes over the wet ones. If you don't have dry clothes, press as much water out of the wet clothes as possible and wrap the casualty in something windproof.



**Warning!** Handle the casualty very gently and keep them horizontal if possible, the heart beat is very delicate and can stop with rough handling. **Don't** give the casualty any alcohol, coffee or other drinks containing caffeine and don't allow them to smoke – this will increase heat loss. **Don't** rub the casualty's body to improve circulations, this will cause cold blood to back to the body core and cool the body further.

For over 125 years, St. John Ambulance has been training over 140,000 Ontarians annually in first aid and other health care related courses and remains dedicated to saving lives at work, home and play. With over 4,000 volunteers contributing over half a million hours of community service a year, St. John Ambulance is an integral part of the community offering such unique and innovative programs as; medical first response, disaster response, car seat clinics, health and safety related youth programs and therapy dog services. As a charitable, humanitarian organization, proceeds from St. John Ambulance's first aid training and first aid product sales directly support these vital community services programs. For more information on St. John Ambulance training courses and volunteer opportunities or to contact your local branch, visit [www.sja.ca/on](http://www.sja.ca/on).