

Leavenworth woman convicted after two children suffer frostbite walking alone in frigid weather

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PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – November 19, 2024

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CASE NUMBER: 2024-CR-000139

LEAVENWORTH, Kan. --- A 57-year-old Leavenworth woman has been convicted of charges related to an incident in which two children suffered frostbite on a frigid, snowy evening.

On Friday, Nov. 15, Debbie J. Schmidt was convicted on two counts of Aggravated Endangering a Child after entering a no-contest plea.

Schmidt left two children, ages six and seven, unattended at her residence in Leavenworth on Jan. 16, 2024. The children became fearful because they were alone during the evening, so they left and walked approximately five blocks to a family member's home. The temperature was below 10 degrees, and a significant amount of snow was on the ground during their walk. Both children were found to have suffered frostbite on their feet.

Leavenworth County Attorney Todd Thompson said, "Laws regarding when it's appropriate to leave children home alone vary from state to state, but recklessly placing a child in a situation where their health is endangered is not acceptable."