



Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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Cold Weather - Harmful Effects

Employees who work outdoors during the winter months must deal with the hazard of exposure to the cold. Prolonged exposure to freezing temperatures can result in health problems as serious as trench foot, frostbite, and hypothermia. There are several ways of preventing employee exposure to cold weather dangers.

Personal Protective Clothing:

Perhaps the most important step is dressing in layers of insulation. Remember you can always take off excess clothing. You should:

- Wear an outer layer to break the wind and allow some ventilation (nylon or gortex).
- Wear a middle layer of wool or synthetic fabric to absorb sweat.
- Wear an inner layer to allow ventilation (cotton).
- Keep your head covered; you lose up to 55% of your body heat through your head.

Engineering Controls:

- Shield work areas from drafty or windy conditions.
- Provide a heated shelter for employees to get temporary relief from the cold.
- Use thermal insulating material equipment handles.

Safe Work Practices:

- Allow a period of adjustment to the cold before start of a full work schedule.
- Allow employees to set their own pace and take extra work breaks as needed.
- Ensure that employees remain hydrated - lots of liquids.
- Establish a buddy system for working outdoors.
- Be aware of the symptoms of cold related stress.

Harmful Effects of Cold Weather:

Most cold related injuries are a result of inadequate clothing and exposure to humidity, high wind, and wet conditions. When cold exposure lasts for more than an hour, cooling of your skin and reduced blood flow to your hands leads to a bloated sensation of touch as well as pain and loss of dexterity and agility.

Employees should be aware of the harmful effects of cold weather. These include trench foot, frostbite, and hypothermia.

Trench Foot

Is caused by long, continuous exposure to a wet, cold environment.

Symptoms – Tingling or itching sensation, burning pain and swelling. Blisters in extreme cases.

Treatment – Move individual to a warm, dry area. Where the affected tissue can be treated, carefully wash and dry, re-warm, and slightly elevate. Seek medical attention.



Frostbite

Occurs when the skin tissue actually freezes causing ice crystals to form between cells and draw water from there. Typically occurs at temperatures below 30° F.

Symptoms – Uncomfortable sensations or coldness, tingling, stinging or aching feeling, followed by numbness. Ears, fingers, toes, cheeks, and nose are primarily affected. Frostbite appears white and is cold to the touch.

Treatment – Seek medical assistance immediately. Frostbitten parts should be covered with dry cloth bandages. DO NOT massage frostbitten tissue because this may cause greater injury.

Hypothermia

Describes the condition of dramatically lowered body temperature that can result from overexposure to cold.

Symptoms – The first symptom is shivering, and mild confusion. As body temperature falls, the victim is in a state of dazed consciousness, blurred speech, and irrational behavior. The most severe state results in slowing of heart rate, blood flow, and breathing.

Treatment – Seek medical assistance immediately. Conserve the victims remaining body heat and provide additional heat sources. Remove all wet clothing and add layers of dry clothing, blankets, etc. External warming techniques may be applied (body to body contact, chemical heat packs, insulated hot water bottles). Avoid giving beverages containing alcohol or caffeine.

Don't Be 'Left Out In The Cold'... Practice Winter Safety!!



Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests