



Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety is Our Business®

Volume 1, Issue 9

March 2nd, 2014

Avoiding Cold Stress Injuries

Did you know that cold stress, or hypothermia, can occur at any time of year? In fact, most cases of cold stress develop in air temperatures between 30 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit. People who are exposed to lower temperatures are at risk for injuries ranging from frostbite to serious loss of body heat that could result in brain damage or death.

Here are some ways to protect yourself from cold stress injuries:

Dress warmly in layers. Preserving an air space between the body and the outer layer of clothing will help retain body heat. Choose fabrics, such as cotton or wool, that insulate while still allowing sweat to evaporate. It is especially important to protect the feet, hands, head, and face. These parts of the body are farthest from the heart and the hardest to keep warm. Almost half your body heat can be lost through the head, so cover it up as well.

Keep dry. Wetness greatly increases the chance of cold stress. Always have extra clothing available if there's a chance you could get wet. Keep your feet dry -- they are very susceptible to frostbite.

Take a break. You may think it's wise to keep on working in cold temperatures. After all, working makes you break a sweat and you feel warmer. But if you become fatigued during physical activity, your body loses its ability to properly retain heat. This causes rapid cooling that can quickly lead to cold stress. When you take a break, be sure to replace lost fluids and calories by drinking soup and warm, sweet, caffeine-free, nonalcoholic beverages.

Eat right. A proper diet provides your body with the nutrients it needs to withstand cold stress. A restrictive diet may deprive your body of the ability to work well in cold temperatures.

Don't work alone. In cold stress-prone environments, a buddy system should be used. Look out for one another and be alert for the symptoms of cold stress.

Learn what to look for. The effects of cold stress may not be apparent to its victim. The first symptoms of hypothermia are uncontrollable shivering and the sensation of cold. The heartbeat slows and may become irregular and the pulse weakens. As the condition worsens, severe shaking or rigid muscles may be evident. The victim may also have slurred speech, memory lapses, and drowsiness. Cool skin, slow, irregular breathing, and exhaustion occur as the body temperature drops even lower. This is a serious condition requiring immediate medical attention.

Frostbite can occur without accompanying hypothermia. Frostbite occurs when the fluids around the body's tissues freeze. The most vulnerable parts of the body are the nose, cheeks, ears, fingers, and toes. Symptoms of frostbite include coldness and tingling in the affected part followed by numbness, changes in skin color to white or grayish-yellow, initial pain that subsides as the condition worsens, and possibly blisters. Frostbite can cause irreversible tissue damage and requires immediate medical attention.

Let safety be a sponge - soak it up



Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

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

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