



Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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Working in Cold Weather

Exposure to cold can result in cold stress which can lead to serious trouble, such as frostbite, hypothermia, and even death. The likelihood of illness depends on many factors, including physical activity, clothing, wind, humidity, and a person's age and general health.

Hypothermia is the most serious effect of cold stress. Once the body loses the ability to maintain its normal temperature, the body temperature lowers and other symptoms such as violent shivering, slow or slurred speech, confusion, hallucinations, a weak and irregular pulse, or unconsciousness occurs. Certain people are more susceptible than others to cold stress. People who are not physically fit, have a chronic illness, drink alcohol or take drugs (including prescription drugs), are wet or damp from work or weather, are fatigued, are exposed to vibration from tools, don't wear the right clothing, or are not used to working in cold have a higher risk from cold stress.

According to OSHA, more than 700 hypothermia deaths occur each year in the United States. In addition to hypothermia, frostbite is also a serious hazard of cold that can cause permanent damage to body tissue.

Effects of cold weather on your body can include:

Numbness - It's usually in your extremities (fingers, toes, ears, nose tip, and cheeks).

Shivering - This is the body's way of trying to warm up.

Frostbite - Parts of your body freeze, especially your extremities.

The first warning sign may be a sharp, prickly sensation; but if the affected body parts are already numb, you won't feel anything so there won't be any warning.

Immersion Foot (Trench-foot) - This is damage you get if your skin is exposed to cold and dampness too long. The skin doesn't actually freeze, but you can get swelling, tingling, itching, loss of skin, or skin ulcers.

Preventing cold-related injuries and illnesses:

- Wear appropriate clothing.
- Avoid wetness or excessive sweating.
- Stay dry. Change into dry clothes and shoes if they become wet.
- Keep active. Avoid sitting or standing still for prolonged periods.
- Take frequent breaks in warm, shielded areas.
- Work in pairs to keep an eye on each other.
- Consume warm, high calorie food often.



- Drink plenty of warm non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic liquids.
- Don't smoke.

Symptoms of hypothermia include:

- Numbness;
- Glassy Stare;
- Loss of consciousness;
- Loss of physical coordination;
- Slurred speech;
- Uncontrollable shivering; and/or
- Dazed consciousness or irrational behavior.

Treating Hypothermia

- Call 911 immediately in an emergency.
- To prevent further heat loss:
 - Move the worker to a warm place.
 - Change to dry clothes.
 - Cover the body (including the head and neck) with blankets, and with something to block the cold (e.g., tarp, garbage bag). Do not cover the face.
- If medical help is more than 30 minutes away:
 - Give warm, sweetened drinks if alert (no alcohol).
 - Apply heat packs to the armpits, sides of chest, neck, and groin.
 - Call 911 for additional rewarming instructions.

Workers can be protected from cold stress by providing training, controlling temperature and exposure to wind when possible by using heaters and windbreaks, rotating workers in cold jobs so that no one is exposed too long, scheduling work at warmest times, encouraging self-pacing and extra breaks if necessary, establishing a buddy system, and keeping first aid supplies and equipment available.

Don't be safety blinded, be safety minded..



Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

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

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



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