



Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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Frostbite

During winter, many of us will continue to work outdoors, exposed to inclement weather. Just as heatstroke is a serious problem in the summer, frostbite can cause serious injury in the winter. It is important to be able to recognize frostbite symptoms and protect yourself from this serious condition. Low temperatures, humidity, and wind velocity all are contributing factors to overexposure from the cold. Usually the victim is unaware of frostbite until someone else observes the pale, glossy skin.

Frostbite results when crystals form, either superficially or deeply in the fluids and soft tissues of the skin. Frostbite can be more severe when the area is thawed and then refrozen. Frostbite usually affects the nose, cheeks, ears, fingers, and toes.

Frostbite is a cold-related emergency that may quickly become life or limb threatening. Preventing cold-related emergencies includes not starting an activity in, on, or around cold water unless you know you can get help quickly in an emergency.

Be aware of the wind chill. Dress appropriately and avoid staying in the cold too long. When appropriate, wear a hat and gloves with layers of clothing. Drink plenty of warm fluids or warm water but avoid caffeine and alcohol. Stay active to maintain body heat. Take frequent breaks from the cold. Avoid unnecessary exposure of any part of the body to the cold. Get out of the cold immediately if the signals of frostbite appear.

Frostbite symptoms:

- Skin color goes from red (flushed) to white or grayish-yellow;
- Pain is felt early, and then subsides completely;
- Blisters may appear later; and
- Affected part feels very cold and numb.

Ways to prevent frostbite:

- Keep all of the extremities covered. In severely cold or windy weather or when riding on an open vehicle, wear a ski-type mask to cover the cheeks.
- Carry spare mittens, liners, and socks in case the ones you're wearing become wet.
- Make sure that gloves and footwear do not fit so tightly that they can cut off circulation.
- Check yourself for frostbite by making sure you can move your fingers and toes and that you still have feeling in your face.

Don't work alone – you and your companion should keep an eye on one another for signs of frostbite.



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Frostbite first aid procedures:

- Cover the frozen part of body with extra clothes or blankets.
- Bring the victim indoors as soon as possible.
- Give the victim warm fluids.
- Re-warm the frozen limb using tepid, not hot water. If water is not available, wrap the affected area in clothing or linens.
- Do not rub the affected skin (this can damage the frozen tissue).
- Do not apply heat (from a lamp, hot water bottle, or over a stove or flame).
- After warming, exercise the affected parts for blood circulation.
- Obtain medical attention as soon as possible.

If you experience symptoms of frostbite, try to gradually bring feeling back into the body. Never rub frostbitten skin or submerge your hands or feet directly into hot water; use warm water or a warm washcloth instead. If you do not feel sensation returning to your body, or if the skin begins to turn gray, go to an emergency room immediately.

Dress for the weather and your outside work will be more comfortable. But remember, it is sometimes difficult for you recognize the symptoms of frostbite in yourself. Make sure you and your companions keep a close watch on each other for the warning signs.

10 fingers... 10 toes... If you're not safe... Who knows!!

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Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

<i>Supervisor:</i>	<i>Subject:</i>
<i>Location:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Conducted By:</i>	<i>Trainer Signature:</i>

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

