



# Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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## Working In Cold Environments

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Summer and fall are gone and the winter months are upon us. Even though it's cold outside we still have to work and get the job done. There are several things we can do to keep warm and prevent cold weather-related accidents.

Cold temperatures and increased wind speed (wind chill) cause heat to leave the body more quickly, putting workers at risk of cold stress. Anyone working in the cold may be at risk, e.g., workers in freezers, outdoor agriculture, and construction.

As the weather becomes “frightful” during winter months, construction workers who must brave the outdoor conditions face the occupational hazard of exposure to the cold. You need to be especially mindful of the weather, its effects on the body, and proper prevention techniques.

### Environmental conditions:

- The following four environmental conditions are the causes of cold-related stress:
- Low temperatures;
- High/cool winds;
- Dampness; and
- Cold water.

When your body is unable to warm itself, serious cold-related illnesses and injuries may occur, and permanent tissue damage and death may result. Hypothermia can occur when land temperatures are above freezing or water temperatures are below 98.6 degrees F. Cold related illnesses can slowly overcome a person who has been chilled by low temperatures, brisk winds, or wet clothing.

### Risk Factors:

- Major risk factors for cold-related stress include the following:
- Wearing inadequate or wet clothing increases the effects of cold on the body.
- Taking certain drugs or medications including alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, and some prescription medications inhibit the body's response to the cold and impair judgment.
- Having a cold or certain disease, such as diabetes, heart, vascular, and thyroid problems, may make a person more susceptible to the winter elements.
- Becoming exhausted or immobilized, especially due to injury or entrapment, may speed up the effects of cold weather.

### Preventing cold-related disorders:

- Wearing the right types of clothing can help in fighting the elements. You should wear at least three layers of clothing such as the following:



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- An outer layer to break the wind and allow some ventilation;
- A middle layer of wool or synthetic fabric to absorb sweat and retain insulation in a damp environment; and
- Inner layers of cotton or synthetic weave to allow for proper ventilation.

## **In addition, you should do the following:**

- Pay special attention to protecting feet, hands, face, and head. Up to 40 percent of body heat can be lost when the head is exposed.
- Wear insulated footwear to protect against cold and dampness.
- Keep a change of clothing available in case work garments become wet.

## **Remember, prepare for cold weather work:**

- Be alert for symptoms of cold stress.
- Dress appropriately and stay dry.
- Use engineering controls, safe work practices, and PPE.

**Ice and Snow...Take it Slow!!**

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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

