



Safety Tip of the Week

Avoiding Cold Stress Injuries

Prolonged exposure to cold and/or freezing temperatures while on the job may cause serious health problems such as trench foot, frostbite and hypothermia. In extreme cases, exposure to cold temperatures can lead to death.

Cold-stress Controls:

Employees must recognize the early stages of cold stress in themselves and others. The first warning sign may be pain in the extremities. Workers in cold conditions should:

- Be medically fit for the cold exposure.
- Eat a balanced diet that includes increased carbohydrates to burn more fuel and increase your body heat. Carbohydrates burn faster than protein and give you quicker energy.
- Understand the risk imposed by the chill factor and be prepared for the conditions.
- Avoid caffeinated or alcoholic drinks that increase water loss and blood flow to the extremities.
- Have a back-up plan when working in isolated areas or use a buddy system to keep an eye on each other and watch for signs of cold stress.

Clothing should be suited for the cold and your level of physical activity. Here are tips to remember when working in the cold:

- Wear several levels of clothing to capture insulating air between the layers.
- To allow for ventilation, wear cotton or synthetic layers next to the skin.
- Wear waterproof or water-repellant outer clothing when working in wet conditions.
- Protect your head from heat loss. When you do not cover your head, you can lose 40 percent of your body heat. Use hats, hoods or hard-hat liners.
- Keep a change of clothing available in case your work clothes become wet.

ICE AND SNOW MEAN TAKE IT SLOW!!

