

Winter Safety – Cold Conditions

January 30, 2017

Good morning everyone. This week as we are about to start experiencing more seasonal temperatures. I thought it might be good to share a few tips on staying warm if working out in cold temperatures. As with any workplace hazard, prevention is key to protecting employees. Here are some tips to prevent cold-related illness:

- Eat properly with plenty of carbohydrates and fats for energy and warmth prior to beginning work.
- Drink fluids. Avoid caffeinated products if possible.
- Get enough sleep. Outdoor work is hard and cannot be done on only a few hours of sleep. Being well rested will make employees feel energized and positive.
- Remove any wet clothes immediately. They cause accelerated heat loss and impair movement.
- Insulate well, particularly the head and neck as these are the areas that lose the most heat the quickest.
- Wear proper winter clothing that insulates from the cold and lets perspiration evaporate while protecting from the wind, rain and snow. Protect feet and toes. Wear two layers of socks — cotton underneath a pair of wool socks is best — with a pair of well-fitted boots that come above the ankle.
- Hand protection is vital. Mittens are warmer than gloves, but can limit dexterity. Wear a pair of gloves under a pair of mittens for warmth, and remove mittens to use gloved fingers as needed.
- Also here are a few items suggested as part of a winter preparedness emergency kit for your vehicle.
 - Sack of sand or kitty litter for tire traction in the snow
 - Dry clothing, mittens, and winter boots
 - Shovel (good to have in general – but especially in snowy areas)
 - Blanket or sleeping bag

Wind Chill	Exposure Risk	Health Concerns	What to Do
0 to -9	Low risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slight increase in discomfort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress warmly • Stay dry
-10 to -27	Moderate risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncomfortable • Risk of hypothermia and frostbite if outside for long periods without adequate protection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. • Wear a hat, mittens or insulated gloves, a scarf and insulated, waterproof footwear. • Stay dry. • Keep active
-28 to -39	High Risk: exposed skin can freeze in 10 to 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk of frostnip frostbite: Check face and extremities for numbness or whiteness. • High risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods without adequate clothing or shelter from wind and cold. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant • Cover exposed skin • Wear a hat, mittens or insulated gloves, a scarf, neck tube or face mask and insulated, waterproof footwear • Stay dry • Keep active