



Worker Safety

Out in the Cold: Tips for Staying Safe

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Winter weather can be tough for those working outdoors. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has some great advice to help keep you safe.

STAY ALERT

Cold temperatures and wind can cause cold stress, lowering your body temperature and leading to serious conditions like frostbite, hypothermia, chilblains, and trench foot.

- **Frostbite:** Freezing skin and tissues, causing numbness and white or pale skin. Can lead to permanent damage.
- **Hypothermia:** Dangerous drop in body temperature below 95°F. Symptoms include shivering, confusion, and slurred speech. Seek medical help immediately.
- **Chilblains:** Painful swelling and redness due to repeated exposure to cold, damp conditions.
- **Trench foot:** Non-freezing injury from prolonged wet and cold conditions. Can occur even at 60°F and can result in tissue death.

UNDERSTANDING WIND CHILL

Wind chill combines air temperature and wind speed to show how cold it feels. For example, 40°F with a 35 mph wind feels like 28°F. Health issues such as hypertension and diabetes can increase risks. Keep an eye on weather reports:

- Wind Chill Advisory = Hazardous conditions.
- Wind Chill Warning = Life-threatening conditions.

BE PREPARED

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) offers tips for preventing cold stress:

- **Dress in Layers:** Wear wool, silk, or synthetic fabrics that keep insulation even when wet. Multiple layers allow you to adjust to conditions.
- **Check Job Sites:** Ensure no hazards like snowdrifts or fallen trees are present.
- **Warm Break Areas:** Provide warm places for breaks, like trailers or tents.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Weather-appropriate PPE plays a large part in helping keep workers safer in cold weather:

- **Gloves:** Essential for protecting against frostbite. Product recommendation: Northflex Cold-Grip™ with superior insulation and dexterity, and NorthFlex Cold-Grip PLUS 5® which offers double duty protection with high-level cut (A4) resistance and brushed acrylic thermal inner.
- **Eye Protection:** Anti-fog safety eyewear is imperative in cold or extreme outdoor environments. Product recommendation: Uvex Sub-Zero™ goggles offer high-impact protection and HydroShield® Anti-Fog coating for consistent fog-free usage.
- **Head Protection:** Hard hats help prevent heat loss and protect against impact and weather. Product recommendation: Fibre Metal Climbing Style Helmet Type 2 and Class E offers suspension technology which enable it to evenly distribute impact-generated force throughout the shell.
- **Footwear:** The right footwear is often necessary to reduce fall risk. Product recommendation: Oliver 45 Series safety footwear is constructed with liquid-resistant leather and offers excellent slip-resistance. The composite toe offers hi-impact protection and is 40% lighter than traditional steel toe caps. Boots are fully lined.
- **Respiratory:** Supplied Air respirator systems are often used in the cold. Product recommendation: Vortex Tube for Supplied Air Hoods. Vortex tube warms (or cools) to your supplied air system for optimum comfort.

Staying safe in cold weather helps ensure productivity and well-being, allowing workers to perform tasks effectively and efficiently. Remember to be prepared and stay aware!

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