



Cold Weather Work

The CompWest Difference

CompWest customers are assigned a dedicated loss control consultant to identify and address loss trends while serving as a safety resource.

Whether working indoors or outdoors, employees need to be aware of the hazards of exposure to cold, how to guard against problems, and how to recognize the symptoms of overexposure. Individual tolerance to temperature extremes vary and anyone can be affected without adequate precautions. The results could be serious injury or even death from failure to recognize the hazards.

Inform workers how to protect themselves from temperatures that can be uncomfortable or dangerous. The key points to discuss are hazard recognition, hazard protection, and procedures to follow in case of overexposure.

Preventative action:

- Limit exposure to cold, especially if weather is windy or humid
- Special care is needed if you're elderly, overweight, have allergies or poor circulation; or if you smoke, drink or take medications
- Problems can arise from touching a subfreezing object
- Wear layers of loose, dry clothing including cotton or wool under layers and a waterproof top layer

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- Be sure to cover head, hands, feet and face
- Change wet clothing immediately
- Keep moving and take regular breaks in heated areas
- Drink warm, nonalcoholic, decaffeinated beverages

Symptoms of frostbite:

- Uncomfortably cold feeling
- Numbness, tingling, aching or pain
- Skin color changing from white to grayish yellow to reddish violet to black
- Skin blisters

If frostbite strikes:

- Get medical attention
- Don't rub body part or apply heat lamp or hot water bottles
- Don't break blisters
- Warm frozen body part quickly with sterile sheets or blankets or warm (not hot) water
- Exercise body part (don't walk on feet)

Recognize the symptoms of hypothermia:

- Pain in extremities
- Numbness and/or stiffness
- Poor coordination, drowsiness or disorientation
- Slow or irregular breathing or heart rate
- Slurred speech
- Cool skin
- Puffy face

If hypothermia strikes:

- Immediately call for medical help
- Move victim into warm area
- Remove frozen, wet or tight clothing and bundle in warm clothes or blankets
- Have victim drink something warm (no caffeine or alcohol)

The advice presented in this document is intended as general information for employers.
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