

Weather Preparation for Employees

From The NPCA Safety Committee

When working in cold weather, taking proper safety precautions can help prevent cold-related illnesses and injuries like frostbite, hypothermia and slips or falls. Here are essential safety measures to follow:

1. Dress in Layers

- **Base Layer:** Wear moisture-wicking fabric close to the skin to keep dry.
- **Insulating Layer:** Use wool or synthetic materials to retain warmth.
- **Outer Layer:** Wear waterproof and wind-resistant outerwear to shield from the elements.

2. Cover Exposed Skin

- Wear gloves, a hat and a scarf or face mask to protect your face and hands from frostbite.
- Insulated boots and wool socks are critical for keeping feet warm and dry.

3. Take Regular Breaks Indoors

- Try to work in shorter intervals and go indoors or into a warmer area regularly to reduce prolonged exposure to cold.

4. Stay Hydrated and Nourished

- Cold weather can lead to dehydration, so drink water often. Warm, high-energy foods help maintain body temperature.

5. Recognize Symptoms of Cold Stress

- Know signs of hypothermia (shivering, confusion, fatigue) and frostbite (numbness, white or pale skin).
- Seek medical help if you or others exhibit these symptoms.

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6. Use Warming Devices Safely

- Heaters and hand warmers can help, but use them carefully to avoid burns or fire hazards.

7. Avoid Alcohol, Caffeine, and Smoking

- Alcohol and caffeine can increase heat loss, while smoking reduces blood circulation to extremities, increasing the risk of frostbite.

8. Walk Carefully on Snow and Ice

- Wear non-slip boots and use extra caution on icy surfaces to prevent slips and falls.

9. Work in Pairs if Possible

- In very cold conditions, working with a partner can ensure someone is there if cold stress or an emergency arises.

By following these precautions, you can stay safer and healthier when working in cold weather conditions.