

TOOLBOX TALKS

The Upside of Safety



Dangers of Cold Weather

Workers exposed to cold temperatures face the hazards of slips/falls, frostbite, and hypothermia if not properly prepared. The rate of injuries resulting from slips and falls increases as the temperature falls below freezing. Cold temperatures combined with wind and/or moisture cause the body to lose heat at a higher rate and increases its susceptibility to cold-related injuries and illnesses.

Immersion/Trench Foot

A non-freezing injury of the feet caused by prolonged exposure to wet and cold conditions. It can occur in temperatures as high as 60°F if feet are constantly wet. Injury occurs because wet feet lose heat 25-times faster than dry feet

Symptoms: Reddening skin, tingling, pain, swelling, leg cramps, numbness, and blisters

Frostbite

Caused by the freezing of the skin and tissues. Frostbite can cause permanent damage to the body, and in severe cases can lead to amputation. The risk of frostbite is increased in people with reduced blood circulation and among people who are not dressed properly for extremely cold temperatures.

Symptoms: Reddened skin develops gray/white patches in the fingers, toes, nose, or ear lobes; tingling, aching, a loss of feeling, firm/hard, and blisters may occur in the affected areas.

Hypothermia

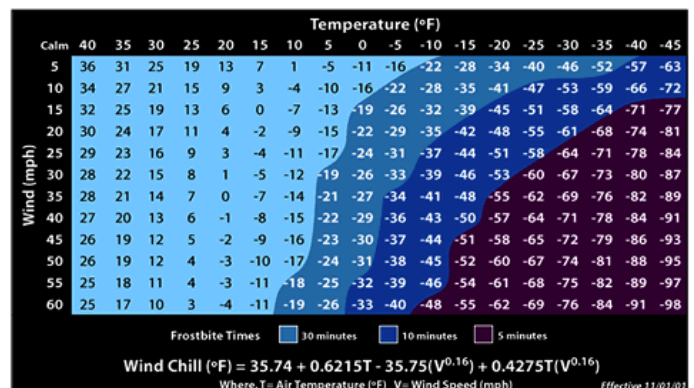
Occurs when the normal body temperature (98.6°F) drops to less than 95°F. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up the body's stored energy. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. Hypothermia is most likely at very cold temperatures, but it can occur even at cool temperatures (above 40°F) if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat, or immersion in cold water.

Symptoms: Uncontrollable shivering, loss of coordination, confusion, slurred speech, heart rate/breathing slow, unconsciousness. Hypothermia is particularly dangerous because a person may not know what is happening and won't be able to do anything about it.

Tips to Prevent Cold Stress Injuries

- Monitor the weather. The colder and windier it is, the greater chance you have of developing cold stress
- Schedule work during the warmest part of the day.
- Schedule frequent short breaks in warm dry areas to allow the body to warm up
- Provide warm, sweet beverages (ie. coffee)

Wind Chill Chart



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✓ SAFETYCHECK

Are you aware of the symptoms of cold stress?

Do workers have an area to warm up at if they display signs of cold stress?

Do you schedule work during the warmest part of the day?

Does someone at the job site monitor the weather?

Company:

Location:

Presenter:

Date:

ATTENDANCESHEET
