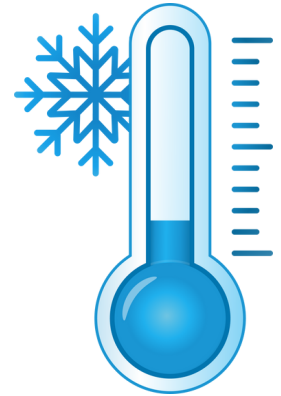




COLD WEATHER

Slipping on ice is a common winter work incident, but not the only one. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports over 40,000 yearly injuries due to snow and ice, with winter storms causing 262 worker deaths in 2021. Weather-related fatalities have increased by 20% over the past five years, raising concerns as colder temperatures return. Prolonged exposure can lead to cold stress, resulting in serious health issues like hypothermia and frostbite. While winter clothing and protective gear are essential, other protective measures for employees should not be overlooked.



TOO COLD TO BE SAFE?

Cold weather exposures can happen in indoor and outdoor work settings when temperatures approach or drop below freezing. Environmental factors that increase risk when temps drop include:

- High wind speeds
- Dampness or humidity
- Rain, snow, or sleet
- Challenging terrain

Employees who are not adequately acclimated to cold working environments, improperly dressed for low temperatures, or have personal risk factors such as diabetes, which can hinder effective blood flow, are particularly vulnerable to cold stress.

HAZARDS

It's crucial to take preventive measures before shivering begins, as shivering is the body's natural method of generating heat.

Allowing core body temperatures to fall below 96.8 degrees Fahrenheit can result in severe health complications, tissue damage, or even death.

Supervisors must ensure effective winter weather training for workers to recognize, prevent, and treat cold-related injuries.

Workers should learn about hypothermia, frostbite, and prevention methods.

SAFETY

Adequate oversight is crucial for proper acclimation, hydration, and warm-up breaks.

Continuous communication among supervisors, workers, and contractors is essential for effective management.

The most effective way to safeguard against cold weather risks is to implement safe work protocols.

Preventative measures are essential to avoid illnesses and injuries related to cold exposure.

Hazard	Hazard
Slips, Trips, Falls	• Maintain walking & working surfaces to avoid slippery areas • Wear shoe cleats for traction • Training
Frostbite, Fatigue, Hypothermia	• Reduce time in the cold • Utilize warming areas during rest breaks • Reduce physical demands during colder periods • Utilize engineering controls (heaters, shields, etc.) • Wear cold weather PPE • Implement a buddy system • Monitor workers who are at-risk