

news & notes

COLD FACTS

Did you know?

- Cold conditions add hazards to normal safety concerns on the job.
- It's not just low temperatures, but also wind and water that workers need to be warned about. For example, when the air temperature of wind is 40 degrees F (4 degrees C) and its velocity is 35 mph, exposed skin receives conditions equivalent to the still-air temperature being 11 degrees F (-11 degrees C).
- Wet conditions also increase the hazards of cold temperatures beyond the actual thermometer reading.

OSHA recommends these precautions:

- Wear at least three layers of clothing.
 - An outer layer, such as GORE-TEX®, to break the wind
 - A middle layer of down or wool to absorb sweat and provide insulation
 - An inner layer of cotton or synthetic weave to allow ventilation
- Wear a hat. Considerable heat escapes the body from the head.
- Keep a change of dry clothing available in case work clothes become wet.
- Wear loose rather than tight clothing for better ventilation.
- Follow work practices, including:
 - Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
 - Schedule work during the warmer parts of the day.
 - Take breaks out of the cold.
 - Work in pairs.
 - Avoid fatigue.
 - Consume warm, high-calorie food.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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Cold Comfort

Stay warm and safe

How cold is too cold? According to OSHA, cold stress can occur when the body is unable to warm itself. This can lead to tissue damage and possibly death. Four factors contribute to cold stress:

1. **Cold air temperatures**
2. **High-velocity air movement**
3. **Dampness of the air**
4. **Contact with cold water or surfaces**

A cold environment forces the body to work harder to maintain its temperature. Cold air, water, and snow all draw heat from the body. OSHA points out that while below-freezing conditions and inadequate protection can bring about cold stress, problems can also occur with much higher temperatures, even in the 50s, when coupled with rain and wind.

The most common cold-induced problems are hypothermia, frostbite, and trench foot.

Hypothermia occurs when body heat is lost faster than it can be replaced. When the core body temperature drops from the normal 98.6°F to around 95°F, symptoms generally begin. The person may begin to shiver and stomp the feet in order to generate heat. Workers may lose coordination, experience slurred speech, and fumble with items in their hands. The skin will likely be pale and cold. As the body temperature falls, symptoms will worsen and shivering will stop. At a body temperature of below 85°F, severe hypothermia will develop and the person may become unconscious; at 78°F, death can occur. Treatment depends on the severity of the hypothermia.

Frostbite occurs when the skin actually freezes and loses water. In severe cases, amputation of the frostbitten area may be required. Frostbite usually affects the extremities. The affected body part will be cold, tingling, stinging, or aching, followed by numbness. The skin turns red in color, then purple, then white, and is cold to the touch. In severe cases, there may be blisters.

Trench foot, or immersion foot, is caused when the feet are immersed in cold water at temperatures above freezing for long periods of time. It is similar to frostbite, but considered less severe. Symptoms include tingling, itching, or a burning sensation.



"All I hear is, 'It's too cold, it's too cold...'" There's only one of you who never complains!"

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HEALTHY WEIGHT WEEK

The third full week in January is **Healthy Weight Week**. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 30 percent of U.S. adults 20 years of age and older—more than 60 million people—are obese (30 or more pounds overweight), and another 50 million are overweight.

Two-thirds of American adults get little or no physical activity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 10 percent to 20 percent of all deaths in the United States can be attributed to poor diet and lack of physical activity.

How about you? Calculate your body mass index (BMI), using the following formula:

Weight (in pounds)
----- x 703 =
BMI
Height (in inches) x Height (in inches)

For example, say a person is 5' 7" (67 inches tall) and weighs 140 pounds:

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{140}{67 \times 67} \times 703 = 21.9$$

For adults, a BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 indicates a healthy weight. A person with a BMI of 25 to 29.9 is overweight, and a person with a BMI of over 30 is obese. People with a high BMI are at greater risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Eat less fatty, sugary fast food and more fresh vegetables, grains, fish, and lean meats. Get regular exercise, like walking, jogging, riding a bike, aerobics, lifting weights, swimming, or dancing.



Electric Shock Hazard

Stay current on electrical safety

Follow precautions when working around electricity and electrical equipment.

Qualified workers:

- Are trained to work on or around energized “live” electrical parts, including overhead power lines
- Must be authorized to implement lockout/tagout and other safety procedures
- Are familiar with proper use of special precautionary techniques, PPE, insulating and shielding materials, and insulated tools

Unqualified workers:

- May not work around live electrical parts
- Need to know electricity-related safety practices
- Must obey all warning signs and tags, and stay out of hazardous areas

Basic rules for electrical safety:

- Use insulated tools and PPE when working around electricity.
- Obey minimum distance requirements for overhead power lines (at least 10 feet away for lower voltages).
- Use nonconducting or insulated tools and equipment (such as wooden ladders) when working near electricity.
- Never use damaged power tools or electrical cords.
- Don't touch electric tools, equipment, or cords that are wet, or with wet hands.

New Year, New Vow

Make safety a full-time habit

January's always a good time to recommit ourselves to various personal and professional commitments. Use this list to recommit to safety basics:

- Know the hazards of your job.
- Always follow safety rules and procedures.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) that's assigned to you.
- Pay attention to safety training and apply what you learn on the job.
- Keep on the lookout for hazards, and keep asking yourself what could go wrong while you work.
- Eliminate or report any hazards you see right away.
- Pay attention to warning signs and do what they tell you.
- Know when you might be exposed to hazardous chemicals and take precautions to protect yourself.
- Read labels, warnings, material safety data sheets (MSDSs), and other safety information before you start a job.
- Practice good housekeeping at all times.
- Report any injury, illness, accident, or near miss to your supervisor immediately.

Remember, when it comes to safety, there's no such thing as a dumb question. If you're not sure about a potential hazard or how to do your job safely, ask your supervisor. Don't perform a task unless you know how to perform it safely!