



## Working Safely in Cold Weather

Winter weather can expose outdoor workers to frostbite, hypothermia, and cold stress, all of which can be fatal. It is important to know the wind chill temperature to better prepare and perform the work safely.

Follow these work practices to stay safe in cold weather:

- Know the symptoms of cold stress; reddening skin, tingling, pain, swelling, leg cramps, numbness, and blisters.
- Dress properly; wear at least three layers of loose-fitting clothing, insulated gloves and boots, and cover your head.
- Monitor your physical condition and that of your coworkers.
- Stay dry and pack extra clothes; moisture can increase heat loss from the body.
- Take frequent breaks in warm, dry areas.
- Drink warm liquids.

### Employers Should Train Workers

At a minimum train workers on:

- Cold Stress:
  - How to recognize the symptoms of cold stress, prevent cold stress injuries and illnesses.
  - The importance of self-monitoring and monitoring coworkers for symptoms.
  - First aid and how to call for additional medical assistance in an emergency.
  - How to select proper clothing for cold, wet, and windy conditions.
- Other winter weather related hazards that workers may be exposed to, for example, slippery roads and surfaces, windy conditions, and downed power lines.
  - How to recognize these hazards.
  - How workers will be protected: engineering controls, safe work practices and proper selection of equipment, including personal protective equipment.

Outdoor work requires proper preparation, especially in severe winter weather conditions. Although OSHA does not have a specific standard that covers working in cold environments, employers have a responsibility to provide workers with employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards, including winter weather related hazards, which are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm them.