

Winter weather and cold stress safety

Hazards include frostbite, hypothermia, and slips on ice.

Dress

Dress in layers that can be added and removed as you get warmer and colder. Don't overdress because it could restrict your movements and increase the chance of an accident. Overdressing can also cause you to overheat and sweat which can cause your clothing to get wet, rendering it ineffective and creating an increased risk of becoming too cold.

Breaks

Take breaks as needed in a warm, dry area to limit the effects of exposure to cold temperatures.

Diet

Eating a healthy lunch and breakfast will help to provide your body with the energy needed to keep your body warm throughout the workday. Drinking warm sports drinks or water with electrolytes throughout the day to replenish lost energy will also help your body combat the cold. Avoid caffeinated beverages because they dehydrate your body and can hinder its ability to keep warm.

Work with a partner

Work with a partner as much as possible so you can keep an eye out for cold stress symptoms (below). If you think you or a coworker is suffering from cold stress, get to a warm, dry place and notify a supervisor immediately.

Hypothermia

- Shivering at first which may then suddenly stop
- Feet stumping to generate heat
- Poor motor skills, slurred speech
- Confusion, disorientation, drowsiness, and lapse in memory
- Inability to walk or stand
- Dilated pupils
- Slow pulse and breath

Frostbite

- Reddened skin with gray and white patches
- Tingling in the affected area, followed by numbness and changes in skin color. Pain subsides and the condition worsens (blisters appear in severe cases)
- Firm or hard skin and limbs

Site specific requirements:

Employee participants:

Date:
