

HAZARD ALERT



COLD WEATHER



When the temperature drops...

During the winter, construction workers face a natural hazard – cold weather. The colder it gets, the more energy you need to stay warm. When it is also windy and raining or snowing, your body uses even more energy and loses heat faster. Working in cold or freezing temperatures for a long time can lead to health problems.

What are the health risks and symptoms?

| Health Risk: | Symptoms: |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Hypothermia¹ | Your temperature drops to 95°F or lower (a normal temperature is 98.6°F). <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Shivering▶ Feel unusually tired or sluggish▶ Clumsiness or lack of coordination▶ Confusion or memory loss▶ Loss of consciousness |
| Frostbite² | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Cold skin and a prickling feeling▶ Numbness▶ Skin that looks red with gray/ white/blue patches▶ Hard or waxy-looking skin▶ Clumsiness due to joint/muscle stiffness▶ Blisters after rewarming (in serious cases) |
| Trench Foot³ | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Tingling and/or itching, pain, swelling, cold and blotchy skin, numbness, and heavy feeling in the foot▶ Red, dry, painful skin after rewarming▶ Blisters, loss of skin and tissue |

Source: Mayo Clinic – ¹www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hypothermia/symptoms-causes/syc-20352682, ² www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/frostbite/symptoms-causes/syc-20372656, ³ www.cdc.gov/disasters/trenchfoot.html#:~:text=Symptoms%20of%20trench%20foot%20include,tissue%20dying%20and%20falling%20off

**If you think you are in danger:
Contact your supervisor. Contact your union.
Call OSHA 1-800-321-OSHA**

Learn more about how to work safely in cold weather:

Visit the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) at <https://bit.ly/4ao5w7Z> or scan this QR code.



Visit the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) at <https://bit.ly/3TrQhVz> or scan this QR code.



Find out more about construction hazards.

To receive copies of this Hazard Alert and cards on other topics,

**call 301-578-8500 or
visit cpwr.com/hazardalerts**



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Protect Yourself In Three Steps:

1 Dress for the weather... OSHA recommends wearing:¹

- ▶ Inner and outer layers that will keep you dry;
- ▶ A hat or hood that covers your ears, and a knit mask (if needed);
- ▶ Waterproof and insulated gloves; and
- ▶ Waterproof and insulated boots.



¹OSHA Winter Weather Preparedness
https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter_weather/beprepared.html

2 Drink the right liquids... To avoid becoming dehydrated, drink plenty of warm, sweet liquids, such as:

- ▶ Sports drinks
- ▶ Soups
- ▶ Sugar water

Avoid liquids with caffeine, such as:

- ▶ Coffee
- ▶ Tea
- ▶ Soda
- ▶ Hot chocolate

Do not drink alcohol. Caffeine and alcohol cause your body to lose heat.

3 Be proactive and alert... When working in a cold environment for a long period of time:

- ▶ Learn the signs and symptoms of cold weather illnesses and injuries.
- ▶ Take frequent breaks in a warm area.
- ▶ Work in pairs so you and your coworker can spot the danger signs.
- ▶ Notify your supervisor and get medical help immediately if you or another worker has symptoms of hypothermia or another cold-related illness or injury.
- ▶ Remember that you are at a higher risk if you take certain medications, are in poor physical condition, or suffer from illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, or cardiovascular disease.

Watch Out for Ice!

To prevent slips, trips, and falls in cold weather, employers should make sure all walking and working surfaces are clear of snow and ice, and spread de-icer as quickly as possible after a winter storm. In addition, the following precautions will help reduce the likelihood of injuries:



- ▶ Wear proper footwear when walking on snow or ice is unavoidable. A pair of insulated and water-resistant work boots with rubber treads is important when working outside in cold weather.
- ▶ Take shorter steps and walk at a slower pace so you can react quickly to a change in traction if you do encounter ice.