

# Cold Weather Safety

## **Cold Weather Safety**

1. Employees
  - a. Know the symptoms of cold stress; reddening skin, tingling, pain, swelling, leg cramps, numbness and blisters. Monitor your condition and that of your coworkers. Shivering is a sign that the body is losing too much heat.
  - b. Hypothermia warning signs include shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, drowsiness.
  - c. Signs of frostbite include white or grayish-yellow skin area, skin that is firm or waxy or numbness. Seek medical care.
  - d. Dress properly, wear at least 3 layers of loose-fitting clothing, insulated gloves and boots, and cover your head. Do NOT wear cotton as a first layer. Second layer should be insulating, top layer wind breaking.
  - e. Stay dry and pack extra clothes; moisture can increase heat loss from the body. Try to avoid sweating. Change socks at lunch.
  - f. Take frequent breaks in warm, dry areas.
  - g. When shoveling snow, take frequent breaks in warm areas and use proper lifting techniques.
  - h. Alcohol and caffeinated beverages cause your body to lose heat faster; drink warm sweet beverages.
  
2. Walking Surfaces
  - a. Clear snow and ice from walking surfaces, spread de-icer.
  - b. Wear footwear that has good traction and insulation.
  - c. Take short steps and walk at a slower pace.
  - d. Clear snow entirely from ladders and scaffolds.
  
3. Driving
  - a. Ensure the vehicle you are driving has good brakes and tires appropriate for winter weather. Check tire pressure.
  - b. Ensure that the battery is fully charged and connections are clean. Have jumper cables available.
  - c. Check windshield wipers and ensure wiper fluid is filled. Likewise with coolant.
  - d. Do not pour warm water on the windshield to remove ice and snow; it may shatter the windshield.
  - e. Provide a snow brush and ice scraper for each vehicle.
  - f. Stock each vehicle with emergency equipment such as chains, jumper cables, tow chain, flashlight with extra batteries, flares or triangles, traction aids (sand or cat litter).
  - g. For longer trips, make sure employees have change of clothes, blankets, water and snacks.
  - h. If stranded, do not leave the vehicle. Display a trouble sign and turn the engine on for 10 minutes every hour to keep warm. Keep exhaust pipe clear to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning and open a downwind window slightly when running the car. Keep on the dome light when running the car. Keep your seat belt on if in danger of being hit.
  - i. Eating snow will lower the body temperature. Melt the snow first.

4. Use of snow blowers
  - a. When attempting to clear jams, make sure equipment is off.
  - b. Never clear a jam with the hand.
  - c. Keep hands and feet away from moving parts.
  - d. Cool engine before refueling.
  
5. Clearing snow from roofs
  - a. Ensure the roof surface is structurally safe before workers access it.
  - b. Watch for overhead electrical hazards when on the roof.
  - c. Fall arrest systems should be used.
  
6. Jobsites
  - a. Ensure heat sources are safe and combustibles are not exposed. Avoid using extension cords for heating units.
  - b. Maintain good ventilation to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
  - c. Allow heated air to reach water pipes where possible. If frozen, do not thaw with a torch, use an electric hair dryer.
  
7. Power Outages
  - a. Stay connected, keep cell phone charged.
  - b. Plan for surge protection on sensitive equipment for when power returns.
  - c. Generators must be at least 20' from any window, door or vent.
  - d. Ensure all equipment is in the off position incase power returns while not onsite.

