

## Cold Weather Work

Indoors or outdoors, employees need to be aware of the hazards of exposure to cold, how to guard against problems, and how to recognize the symptoms of overexposure. Individual tolerance to temperature extremes vary and anyone can be affected without adequate precautions. The results could be serious injury or even fatal from failure to recognize the hazards.

Inform workers how to protect themselves from temperatures that can be uncomfortable or dangerous. The key points to bring out are hazard recognition, hazard protection, and procedures to follow in case of overexposure.

<p><b>Preventative Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit exposure to cold, especially if weather is windy or humid.</li> <li>• Special care is needed if you're elderly, overweight, have allergies, or poor circulation.</li> <li>• Special care is also needed if you smoke, drink, or take medications.</li> <li>• Problems can arise even in above-freezing temperatures.</li> <li>• Problems can also arise from touching a subfreezing object.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear layers of loose, dry clothing</li> <li>• Wear cotton or wool under layers.</li> <li>• Wear a waterproof top layer.</li> <li>• Be sure to cover head, hands, feet, and face.</li> <li>• Dry or change wet clothing immediately.</li> <li>• Keep moving in the cold.</li> <li>• Take regular breaks in heated areas.</li> <li>• Move to a warm area if you feel very cold or numb.</li> <li>• Drink a warm nonalcoholic, decaffeinated beverage</li> <li>• Don't bathe, smoke, or drink alcohol before going into the cold</li> </ul>
<p><b>Symptoms of frostbite:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncomfortably cold feeling</li> <li>• Feeling numb</li> <li>• Tingling, aching, or brief pain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skin color changing from white to grayish yellow to reddish violet to black</li> <li>• Skin blisters</li> <li>• Unconsciousness</li> </ul>
<p><b>If frostbite strikes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get medical attention.</li> <li>• Don't rub body part or apply heat lamp or hot water bottles.</li> <li>• Don't go near a hot stove.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't break blisters</li> <li>• Warm frozen body part quickly with sheets or blankets or warm (not hot) water.</li> <li>• Exercise warmed body part (don't walk on feet, though).</li> <li>• Elevate frozen body part and cover with sterile cloths before moving.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Know symptoms of hypothermia:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling cold</li> <li>• Pain in extremities</li> <li>• Shivering</li> <li>• Numbness and/or stiffness</li> <li>• Poor coordination</li> <li>• Drowsiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow or irregular breathing or heart rate</li> <li>• Slurred speech</li> <li>• Cool skin</li> <li>• Puffy face</li> <li>• Disorientation</li> <li>• Apathy</li> </ul>
<p><b>If hypothermia strikes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately call for medical help.</li> <li>• Give victim artificial respiration, if needed.</li> <li>• Move victim into warm area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get victim out of frozen, wet, or tight clothing.</li> <li>• Bundle victim in warm clothes or blankets.</li> <li>• Have victim drink something warm (no caffeine or alcohol).</li> </ul>

**If You Have Any Questions or Need Assistance  
Contact Your CompWest Loss Control Consultant**