



“Your Connection for Workplace Safety”  
Phone: 920-208-7520

*We're about service, commitment, results, and accountability!*

*Our Weekly Safety Tip provides valuable and current safety information relevant for Work, Home & Play.*

*And, you will be kept current on the latest Safety Compliance issues.*



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**We want to hear from you! Send us your feedback and give us ideas for future safety topics.**

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**Safety Slogan**

**Winter safety is COOL**

**James Lehrke-SCI**

**Of the week**

## SCI Safety Tip: Winter is here!

Source: <http://www.blr.com>

Date: December 18, 2013

With winter in full swing, OSHA is reminding employers to protect workers from cold stress, icy conditions, and other winter hazards.

Most injuries during winter storms—70 percent according to the National Weather Service—are a result of vehicle accidents, while 25 percent result from being caught out in a storm. To help prevent these injuries, OSHA urges businesses to anticipate the hazards their workers will be exposed to during a winter storm and plan accordingly to help them stay safe.

### Preparing for winter storms

For employees whose work will require them to drive when there is a possibility of a winter storm, it's important to be prepared. Vehicles should be inspected before use to make sure they're in good working condition. Tires, oil, brakes, visibility systems, the engine, the cooling system, the exhaust system, and the electrical system should all be included in the inspection.

In addition, drivers should carry an emergency kit containing blankets, a cell phone or two-way radio, a windshield scraper and snow brush, a flashlight with extra batteries, a shovel, extra winter clothing, a tow chain, matches, traction aids such as a bag of sand or cat litter, emergency flares, jumper cables, snacks, water, and road maps.

Employers should also consider having winter storm supplies on their premises. Examples of important items to have on hand include food, water, blankets, a weather radio, flashlights and extra batteries, salt and sand or cat litter for deicing and traction, and snow shovels or a snowblower to clear walkways where employees must travel.

### Working during a storm

If your employees will need to work outside during a winter storm, keep the following hazards in mind:

**Frostbite and hypothermia.** Both conditions are a result of extreme cold. Frostbite is severe, sometimes permanent damage to the deep layers of skin and tissue characterized by a loss of feeling and a waxy-white or pale appearance in the fingers, toes, nose, or earlobes. Hypothermia occurs when the body temperature drops below 95° Fahrenheit; symptoms include uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapses, frequent stumbling, drowsiness, and exhaustion. Severe hypothermia can be fatal.

To prevent frostbite and hypothermia, workers should wear proper clothing for cold, wet, and windy conditions. This typically consists of several layers, including a water-resistant outer layer, a hat, and gloves. In addition, workers should take frequent, short breaks in warm, dry shelters; drink warm, sweet beverages (avoiding those that contain caffeine or alcohol); and eat warm, high-calorie foods.

To help a person with possible frostbite or hypothermia, seek immediate medical assistance and warm the person slowly, starting with the trunk. Arms and legs should be warmed last. Put the person in dry clothing and wrap him or her in a blanket. Never give anything containing caffeine or alcohol to a person with hypothermia or frostbite.

**Slips and falls.** To avoid injuries, clear walking surfaces of snow and ice and use salt, sand, or other materials to melt ice and provide traction. If employees must walk on snow- and ice-covered surfaces, they should make sure to wear boots with good rubber treads to provide traction. Walking slowly and taking smaller steps also help to prevent slips and falls.

**Snow removal hazards.** Shoveling snow can be physically taxing and can lead to exhaustion, dehydration, back injuries, heart attacks, and other conditions. To reduce the risk of injury, workers should follow the following precautions:

- Warm up before shoveling.
- Push snow instead of lifting whenever possible.
- Shovel small amounts of snow at a time.
- When lifting snow, keep the back straight and lift with the legs.

If employees are using a snowblower to remove snow, lacerations and amputations can be a hazard. To avoid these injuries, workers should never attempt to clear a jammed machine by hand or while it is running; instead, they should turn the machine off, wait 5 seconds, and then use a long stick or other object to clear out wet snow or debris. In addition, workers should never add fuel to a snowblower while it is running or hot; fueling should be completed before operating the machine.

More information on winter storm safety is available at [https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter\\_storm/index.html](https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter_storm/index.html).

## SCI OSHA Quick-card: Cold Stress

Source: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/coldcard/coldcard.html>

### FROST BITE

#### What Happens to the Body:

FREEZING IN DEEP LAYERS OF SKIN AND TISSUE; PALE, WAXY-WHITE SKIN COLOR; SKIN BECOMES HARD and NUMB; USUALLY AFFECTS THE FINGERS, HANDS, TOES, FEET, EARS, and NOSE.

#### What Should Be Done: (Iand temperatures)

- Move the person to a warm dry area. Don't leave the person alone.
- Remove any wet or tight clothing that may cut off blood flow to the affected area.
- **DO NOT** rub the affected area, because rubbing causes damage to the skin and tissue.
- **Gently** place the affected area in a warm (105°F) water bath and monitor the water temperature to **slowly** warm the tissue. Don't pour warm water directly on the affected area because it will warm the tissue too fast causing tissue damage. Warming takes about 25-40 minutes.
- After the affected area has been warmed, it may become puffy and blister. The affected area may have a burning feeling or numbness. When normal feeling, movement, and skin color have returned, the affected area should be dried and wrapped to keep it warm. **NOTE:** If there is a chance the affected area may get cold again, do not warm the skin. If the skin is warmed and then becomes cold again, it will cause severe tissue damage.
- Seek medical attention as soon as possible.

## HYPOTHERMIA - (Medical Emergency)

### What Happens to the Body:

NORMAL BODY TEMPERATURE (98.6° F/37°C ) DROPS TO OR BELOW 95°F (35.0 C); FATIGUE OR DROWSINESS; UNCONTROLLED SHIVERING; COOL BLUISH SKIN; SLURRED SPEECH; CLUMSY MOVEMENTS; IRRITABLE, IRRATIONAL OR CONFUSED BEHAVIOR.

### What Should Be Done: (land temperatures)

- Call for emergency help (i.e., Ambulance or Call 911).
- Move the person to a warm, dry area. Don't leave the person alone. Remove any wet clothing and replace with warm, dry clothing or wrap the person in blankets.
- Have the person drink warm, sweet drinks (sugar water or sports-type drinks) if they are alert. **Avoid drinks with caffeine** (coffee, tea, or hot chocolate) or alcohol.
- Have the person move their arms and legs to create muscle heat. If they are unable to do this, place warm bottles or hot packs in the arm pits, groin, neck, and head areas. **DO NOT** rub the person's body or place them in warm water bath. This may stop their heart.
- **What Should Be Done: (water temperatures)**
- Call for emergency help (Ambulance or Call 911). Body heat is lost up to 25 times faster in water.
- **DO NOT** remove any clothing. Button, buckle, zip, and tighten any collars, cuffs, shoes, and hoods because the layer of trapped water closest to the body provides a layer of insulation that slows the loss of heat. Keep the head out of the water and put on a hat or hood.
- Get out of the water as quickly as possible or climb on anything floating. **DO NOT** attempt to swim unless a floating object or another person can be reached because swimming or other physical activity uses the body's heat and reduces survival time by about 50 percent.
- If getting out of the water is not possible, wait quietly and conserve body heat by folding arms across the chest, keeping thighs together, bending knees, and crossing ankles. If another person is in the water, huddle together with chests held closely.
- Use the buddy system (work in pairs).
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- Drink warm, sweet beverages (sugar water, sports-type drinks). Avoid drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, or hot chocolate) or alcohol.
- Eat warm, high-calorie foods like hot pasta dishes.

### Workers Are at Increased Risk When...

- They have predisposing health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hypertension.
- They take certain medication (check with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacy and ask if any medicines you are taking affect you while working in cold environments).
- They are in poor physical condition, have a poor diet, or are older.



What do you think?  
Send us an email at:  
[jlconnections@aol.com](mailto:jlconnections@aol.com)  
See our bold new look @  
<http://www.safetyconnections.com/>

In Loving  
Memory of Jessica  
Lehrke

**Remember...** When the body is unable to warm itself, serious cold-related illnesses and injuries may occur, and permanent tissue damage and death may result.

**Hypothermia** can occur when land temperatures are **above** freezing or water temperatures are below 98.6°F/ 37°C.

Cold related illnesses can slowly overcome a person who has been chilled by low temperatures, brisk winds, or wet clothing.