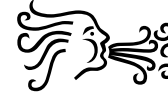


# Handling The Cold



Excessive cold can be unbearable for many construction workers. Add rain, snow, and wind, and you have a recipe for disaster. Fortunately, if you understand cold, wet, and windy hazards and protection methods, you can prevent discomfort and cold injuries. While you cannot affect the cold, wind or rain, you can take the following precautions for work in cold:



- ❖ Wear the proper clothing.
- ❖ Eat proper foods and exercise to protect against heat and cold.
- ❖ Drink liquids (especially water) for adequate circulation.
- ❖ Get plenty of rest for less vulnerability to heat and cold.
- ❖ Take shelter from snowstorms, or if you begin to feel weak.
- ❖ Avoid smoking, chewing tobacco, or drinking alcoholic beverages for proper blood circulation.
- ❖ Slowly habituate yourself to working in the cold.

Two common cold injuries, frostbite and hypothermia, are summarized in the table below.

<b>Cold Disorder:</b>	<b>Cause:</b>	<b>Symptom:</b>	<b>Treatment:</b>
<b>Frostbite</b>	Tissue death caused by freezing.	Hands, feet, the face and ears are most vulnerable to frostbite.	Get professional medical assistance for frostbite victims. Provide first care before medical help is available, if necessary, including rewarming of affected parts in stirred water just above normal body temperature, optimally 100 degrees to 105 degrees, and not using fires and stoves to rewarm frostbitten skin (these areas have no feeling).
<b>Hypothermia</b>	A person's internal temperature falls abnormally low at a rate such that his or her body cannot produce enough heat to replace what was lost. Hypothermia can occur even above freezing.	Shivering (the body is trying to make heat); troubled speech; confusion/forgetfulness; loss of dexterity; stumbling; semi-consciousness to unconsciousness; weakness; collapse; eventual heart/lung failure and death.	Get professional medical assistance for hypothermia victims. Provide first care before medical help is available, if necessary, including covering the victim or moving him or her indoors if possible; carefully handling the victim because of the frailty of the heart at low body temperature; not using hot baths for warming; not giving a victim food or drink; and not raising the legs of an unconscious victim (cold blood will flow to the body core and cause further temperature reduction).

In addition to taking warm-up breaks and being habituated, you can protect yourself from cold, wet, and wind with insulated, loose, and layered clothing; a waterproof and wind proof outer layer; heating devices; wind barriers; and frequent warm-up breaks.