

Construction – Cold Weather & Construction Work

During cold weather, construction work requires special safety considerations. Weather extremes, such as high winds, cold temperatures, ice, snow, sleet, and freezing rain, present potential hazards to workers operating in an already hazardous environment. This checklist style handout highlights basic safety concerns for evaluating job site safety during cold weather.

General:

- Have tasks that involve exposure to cold been identified?
- Is training provided for workers on the proper use of protective clothing and equipment, and the precautions to take during cold weather construction?
- Have workers been trained to recognize the signs of frostnip, frostbite, and hypothermia?
- Do workers understand that alcohol and drugs may increase the risk of hypothermia?
- Do workers know how to administer first aid for frostnip, frostbite, and hypothermia?
- Are first aid supplies and equipment readily available?
- Are emergency telephone numbers for medical help kept in a handy place?
- Are area weather reports monitored on a regular basis?
- Are tool and equipment areas kept clear of snow, ice, or mud accumulations to allow ready access to workers?
- During inclement weather, are all access roads kept clear and opened?

Work Practices:

- Are temperature and wind controls used as much as possible?
- Are portable heaters used, where feasible?
- Do workers wear the required protective clothing and equipment for the job?
- Do workers wear waterproof boots during wet conditions?
- Do workers periodically check their extremities (fingers, toes, ears, nose tip, and cheeks) to detect numb or hard areas that might indicate frostbite?
- Do workers use the "buddy system" to recognize signs of frostbite and hypothermia in each other?
- Are job assignments rotated during cold weather to lessen worker exposure to the cold?
- Are warm sheds, trailers, or vans provided so workers can take breaks and warm up?
- Are there plenty of warm liquids (soup, broth, coffee, or tea) readily available for workers on the job site to avoid dehydration?