

Winter working

Prepare: Quiet location? No distractions? Talk aids ready?

Reason: Outdoor workers can experience excessive exposure to low temperatures and therefore, are at more risk from hypothermia.

Why: There are simple steps that you can take to protect yourself, of which you must be aware.

Outline: This talk will cover the facts and statistics about hypothermia and frostbite, who is at risk and how to protect yourself.



Hazards

- Hypothermia is a potentially fatal condition caused by a loss of body temperature. For example, exposed skin can begin to freeze at just -2 degrees Celsius and deep frostbite can lead to blood clots and even gangrene.
- Symptoms include fatigue, nausea, confusion, light headedness and profuse sweating. Without prompt medical attention, the operative can lose consciousness and may die.
- Stay dry in the cold because moisture or dampness, e.g. from sweating, can increase the rate of heat loss from the body.
- Keep extra clothing handy in case you get wet and need to change.

Q: Name some of the symptoms of cold stress?

What you should do

- We typically think of dehydration as a heat-related issue, but it applies to cold weather as well. Its important to drink plenty of fluids before starting work. Warm, sweetened liquids can be especially helpful, while alcoholic drinks should be avoided.
- Wear at least three layers of loose-fitting clothing. Layering provides better insulation. Avoid tight fitting clothing. An inner layer of wool, silk or synthetic to keep moisture away from the body. A middle layer of wool or synthetic material for insulation even when wet. An outer layer for wind and rain protection with some ventilation to prevent overheating.

Q: When should you hydrate and what with?

NOTES

[illegible]

TOOLBOX TALK #33

Winter working

Do not wear hoodies or beanie hats under your hart hat

- At this time of year we start to see a larger number of operatives wearing their hoodies or beanie hats under their safety helmets to keep them warm. This not only endangers yourselves by compromising the fit or the helmet but also endangers others if the helmet were to fall off their head from a height.
- By wearing a hoody/beanie (or other winter hat) under your safety helmet, you are interfering with the fit of the chin strap. Wearing anything underneath the helmet means that it cannot be fitted, adjusted or worn to be manufacturers safety requirements putting yourself and others in danger. As hoody also reduces your field of vision. This greatly increases the chance of an accident as you may be unaware of oncoming plant machinery, trip or fall hazards or other individuals working.

Q: Why is it bad to wear a hoody or beanie under a safety helmet?

- The best practice would be to only use manufacturer approved head warmers under safety helmet. This will ensure you receive the best possible fit for your safety helmet without compromising on safety.

Do you have any questions for me?

Questions for you

Q: What can we safely wear to keep our heads warm on site?

Q: How can we keep warm on-site

NOTES

Sources: [Temperature in the workplace: Is it too cold or hot to work? - HSE](#) [Temperature in the workplace: Outdoor working - HSE](#)

For more information

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