



# WORKING IN COLD WEATHER

All work shall comply with the EH&S Safety Manual. The below is an attempt to summarize a portion of the Safety Manual specific to this topic, but not intended to replace the Safety Manual. A copy of the Safety Manual is available from your supervisor or EH&S.

## When the temperature drops...

During the winter, construction workers face a natural hazard – cold weather. The colder it gets, the more energy you need to use to stay warm. When it is also windy and raining or snowing your body uses even more energy and loses heat faster. Working in cold or freezing temperatures for a long time can lead to health problems.



## What are the health risks and symptoms?

Health Risk:	Symptoms:
Hypothermia	<p>Your temperature drops to 95°F or lower (a normal temperature is 98.6°F). You:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Shiver and stomp your feet to stay warm</li> <li>▶ Feel unusually tired</li> <li>▶ Lose coordination</li> <li>▶ Become confused</li> <li>▶ Lose consciousness</li> </ul>
Frostbite	<p>Your skin freezes and becomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Red with gray/white patches</li> <li>▶ Numb – you cannot feel the area</li> <li>▶ Blistered (in serious cases)</li> </ul>
Trench Foot	<p>Your foot is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Tingly/itchy</li> <li>▶ Red and blotchy</li> <li>▶ Swollen and/or numb – you cannot feel your foot</li> </ul>

SOURCES: OSHA Cold Stress Guide <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/emergencypreparedness/guides/cold.html>  
NIOSH Fast Facts: Protecting Yourself from Cold Stress <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-115/pdfs/2010-115.pdf>

## Protect Yourself In Three Steps:

### 1 Dress for the weather...

OSHA recommends wearing:<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ Inner and outer layers that will keep you dry;
- ▶ A hat or hood that covers your ears, and a knit mask (if needed);
- ▶ Waterproof and insulated gloves; and
- ▶ Waterproof and insulated boots.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TECHNICAL ADVANTAGE GEAR

Carry extra clothes in case the ones you are wearing get wet.

<sup>1</sup>OSHA Winter Weather Preparedness [https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter\\_weather/beprepared.html](https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter_weather/beprepared.html)

### 2 Drink the right liquids...

To avoid becoming dehydrated, drink plenty of warm, sweet liquids, such as:

- ▶ Sports drinks
- ▶ Soups
- ▶ Sugar water

Avoid liquids with caffeine, such as:

- ▶ Coffee
- ▶ Tea
- ▶ Soda
- ▶ Hot chocolate

Do not drink alcohol. Caffeine and alcohol cause your body to lose heat.

### 3 Be proactive and alert...

When working in a cold environment for a long period of time:

- ▶ Learn the signs and symptoms of cold weather illnesses and injuries.
- ▶ Take frequent breaks in a warm area.
- ▶ Work in pairs so you and your coworker can spot the danger signs.
- ▶ Notify your supervisor and get medical help immediately if you or another worker has symptoms of hypothermia or another cold-related illness or injury.
- ▶ Remember – you are at a higher risk if you take certain medications, are in poor physical condition, or suffer from illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, or cardiovascular disease.





# WALKING ON ICE

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## Safety

## TIP Sheet

## Be SAFE on ICE

# Walk Like a Penguin

While it is ideal to not have to walk on ice, sometimes it is unavoidable. One of the best examples of how to do it comes from the animal kingdom — most notably the penguin.

If you have ever seen a penguin walk, they sort of waddle with their feet pointed outward, creating as much friction with the ice as possible.



### When walking on ice, try to keep this in mind:

- Spreading your feet out slightly while walking on ice increases your center of gravity.
- Bend slightly and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over your feet as much as possible.
- Extend your arms to your sides to maintain balance.
- Beware if you are carrying a heavy bag or other load – your sense of balance will be off.
- And just like on the road, black ice can be in a parking lot, too. Just because it doesn't look like ice, if the conditions are right it could very well be slippery.

### WINTER LESSONS: HOW TO WALK ON ICE



