

WORKING IN WET OR COLD WEATHER

Actsafes's Toolbox Talks are intended as an informational resource for employers and supervisors to use to deliver a safety talk on a specific subject. A toolbox talk can be an effective way of refreshing workers' knowledge of safe work procedures and sharing information with more experienced workers.

Working in wet or cold weather

When working in wet or cold conditions, slipping on icy surfaces, hypothermia, and frostbite are common hazards. With proper awareness and pre-planning, these hazards can be eliminated.

- **Slippery conditions**

- Use non-conductive ice melt or sand to cover icy areas when needed. It is recommended that footwear have good treads and be insulated to protect against the cold.

- **Hypothermia**

- Hypothermia is a potentially deadly condition which results in an abnormally low body temperature. This drop in temperature occurs when the body loses heat faster than it is produced.
- Wearing wet clothing can increase the risk of hypothermia.
- Early symptoms of hypothermia that are often overlooked include:
 - Intense shivering
 - Muscle tension
 - Fatigue
 - Intense feeling of cold or numbness

- **Frostbite**

- Frostbite is a result of the freezing of fluids in the skin, which can permanently damage the tissue. This condition usually affects the extremities, such as fingertips and toes.
- Signs and symptoms of frostbite include:
 - Blanching or whitening of the skin
 - In severe cases, blisters may be present
 - Swelling, itching, burning, and deep pain when the skin warms

At the first sign of any of these conditions, notify your supervisor and/or seek medical attention (i.e. first aid, hospital or medical provider) then go inside and get warm.

What can we do to prevent hypothermia and frostbite?

- Some things to discuss when it comes to preventing hypothermia and frostbite:
 - Wear proper, layered clothing that allows the skin to breathe and protects from cold, wind rain, and snow.
 - Wear proper fitting shoes that aren't too tight to allow for proper circulation.
 - Take breaks to go inside and warm up, drink plenty of fluids, and eat properly.

Attendees (attach Sign-in Sheet if needed): _____

| Name | Initials | Name |
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Date: _____

Supervisor/Department: _____