



## **Cold Awareness & Cold-Related Hazards Winter Weather Advisories**

It is important to know the winter weather and wind chill temperatures to gauge the potential exposure risks that employees will face. This allows the time to better plan how to safely do the work that needs to be done, as well as to make adjustments to the work schedule throughout the day.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information from the nearest NWS office. It will give information when wind chill conditions reach critical thresholds. Understanding the differences between the watches and warning is vital for scheduling.

### **ADVISORY – BE AWARE**

- Winter Weather Advisories are issued when snow, blowing snow, ice, sleet, or a combination of these wintry elements is expected but conditions should not be hazardous enough to meet warning criteria. Be prepared for winter driving conditions and possible travel difficulties. Use caution when driving.
- Wind Chill Advisories are issued when low wind chill temperatures are expected but will not reach local warning criteria. Extremely cold air and strong winds will combine to generate low wind chill readings. If you must venture outdoors, take precautions against frostbite and hypothermia.

### **WATCH – BE PREPARED**

- Winter Storm Watches are issued when conditions are favorable for a significant winter storm event (heavy sleet, heavy snow, ice storm, heavy snow and blowing snow or a combination of events.)
- Wind Chill Watches are issued when there is the potential for a combination of extremely cold air and strong winds to create dangerously low wind chill values.
- Blizzard Watches are issued when there is a potential for falling and/or blowing snow with strong winds and extremely poor visibilities. This can lead to whiteout conditions and make travel very dangerous.

### **WARNING – TAKE ACTION**

- Winter Storm Warnings are issued for a significant winter weather event including snow, ice, sleet, blowing snow, or a combination of these hazards. Travel will become difficult or impossible in some situations.
- Wind Chill Warning are issued for a combination of very cold air and strong winds that will create dangerously low wind chill values. This level of wind chill will



result in frostbite and lead to hypothermia if precautions are not taken. Avoid going outdoors and wear warm protective clothing if you must venture outside.

- Ice Storm Warnings are usually issued for ice accumulation of around  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch or more. This amount of ice accumulation will make travel dangerous or impossible and likely lead to snapped power lines and falling tree branches. Travel is strongly discouraged.
- Blizzard Warnings are issued for frequent gusts greater than or equal to 35 mph accompanied by falling and/or blowing snow, frequently reducing visibility to less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile for three hours or more. A Blizzard Warning means severe winter weather conditions are expected or occurring. Falling and blowing snow with strong winds and poor visibilities are likely, leading to whiteout conditions making travel extremely difficult. Do not travel. If you must travel, have a winter survival kit with you.

#### **SAFETY REMINDER**

**Watch For the Warning – that helps to remember that the Watch will come before the Warning.**