



Preparing for Winter Hazards

With such a cold Fall Season starting already, it isn't a stretch to say that Winter is fast approaching. With it comes rain, sleet, snow, ice, wind, and shorter days with limited daylight. The cold weather can expose you to hazards that could result in injuries, serious health problems, and even death. As the temperatures drop, think about each of the following winter hazards and learn how to protect yourself from the dangers of the winter season.

Cold Temperatures: When working outdoors, remember that low temperatures, combined with wind and dampness, lead to injuries and illness. Wear clothing appropriate for cold, wet, and windy conditions. Layer your clothing so you can adjust to changing environments. If you get wet, change into dry clothing immediately.

Frostbite: Frostbite occurs when skin tissue freezes. It usually affects the fingers, hands, toes, feet, ears, and nose. Prevention includes wearing gloves; keeping feet dry and warm (two layers of wool socks works wonders); covering ears with earmuffs, hard hat liners, or ear protectors; and keeping your nose warm. If you think you have frostbite, don't rub affected areas since rubbing can cause further damage to the skin. Seek medical assistance immediately.

Hypothermia: Hypothermia is a medical emergency that occurs when your body temperature drops below 95° Fahrenheit. Symptoms include fatigue, uncontrolled shivering, cool bluish skin, and slurred speech. Call 911 immediately. Move the victim to warm area, replace wet clothing, and wrap the person in blankets.

Limited Daylight: Getting to work and driving back home in the dark requires extra vigilance. Both at work and home keep walkways and stairs clear of obstructions. Watch carefully for tripping hazards in low light conditions.

Slip, Trip, and Fall Hazards: Make sure all walking and working surfaces are free of snow, ice, mud, and rain to reduce slipping and tripping hazards as well as falls. Be especially careful of wet floors when entering and leaving buildings.

Portable Heaters: When keeping your work area or home warm with a portable heater place it at least three feet away from flammable objects. Never leave a portable heater on when you leave the area.

Winter Driving: When driving in cold, wet, or icy weather, allow plenty of time, and make sure your gas tank is full. Keep your windows and windshield clear. Drive slowly, wear your seatbelt, and leave plenty of room between you and the next vehicle. Always



make an effort to plan for the unexpected. Watch for children- slow down near schools and bus stops.

SAFETY REMINDER

Use breaks and mealtimes to boost your defenses against the cold. Drink warm beverages but avoid caffeine. Eat warm, high-calorie foods such as pasta dishes.