



Warm-Up and Break Schedules

Where there are no maximum/minimum exposure limits for cold working environments, there are guidelines that can be used to conduct work/task assessments, create safe work plans, and monitor conditions to protect the health and safety of workers who may be exposed to cold temperatures. Where there are differences between the recommendations made by various organizations (and where there are no established limits or guidelines from your jurisdiction), employers are encouraged to choose a system that best provides protection for their workforce.

Protective measures based on the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) recommended warm-up and break schedule include:

32°F or above

Basic cold safety and planning

- Normal Breaks
- Warm beverages available in staff break areas

15°F to 31°F

Moderate Risk - In addition to steps listed above:

- Be aware of wind chill index anticipated for the day and identify precautionary actions as necessary
- Review with staff how to recognize cold-related illnesses, how to prevent them, and what to do if someone gets sick (see Table 3 above)
- Remind staff to layer clothing and cover their hands, head, and face
- Remind staff to drink hot beverages, avoiding caffeine and alcohol
- Watch workers for signs of cold-related illness

0°F to 14°F

High Risk - In addition to the steps listed above:

- 15-minute warm-up break for every 2 hours working outside of a heated area/vehicle
- When possible, reschedule activities to a time when it will be warmer
- Alert workers of high risk and extended breaks
- Watch/check in with workers frequently

-15°F to 0°F

Very High Risk - In addition to the steps listed above:

- 15-minute warm-up break for every 1 hour working outside of a heated area/vehicle.



- Reschedule non-essential activity for another time/day when it will be warmer. Move essential work tasks to the warmest part of the work shift.

Less than -15°F

Severe Risk - In addition to the steps listed above:

- 15-minute warm-up break for every 30 minutes working outside of a heated area/vehicle.
- Refer to the Warm-up and Break chart for lower temperatures, and increased wind recommendations

SAFETY REMINDER

When the body is unable to warm itself, serious cold-related illnesses and injuries may occur.