

DuPage County Environmental, Safety, Health & Property Loss Control Program

Stay Warm

Working outside in the winter exposes employees to a number of hazards, including the risk of weather-related conditions such as frostbite. Cold weather can affect the body's senses, altering the ability to see, smell and feel, according to the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. Dressing to protect against the elements can help reduce the impact cold weather has on workers' health and productivity.

Washington L&I issued the following recommendations for working outdoors:

- Always dress with loose outer layers and tighter inner layers to help trap heat. Do not over-bundle.
- Use outer layers of clothing as a windbreaker. This will make the layers underneath more effective.
- To minimize sweat, remove layers if you begin to feel hot. Try to avoid getting clothing wet, as this reduces protection from the cold.
- Wear a hat or other head protection to help retain body heat.
- Be sure to protect your feet, as they likely will feel the effects of the cold first. Wool socks are effective, and four-buckle overshoes provide additional protection for your feet.
- Wear proper gloves. A thin pair of wool gloves worn under leather gloves will provide adequate protection.
- Be careful not to overdress, as this can restrict movement, increasing the likelihood of an incident.

Frost Bite Recognition:

Freezing in deep layers of skin and tissue; pale, waxy-white skin color: Skin becomes hard and numb, usually affects the fingers, hands, toes, feet, ears and nose.

Frost Bite Emergency Care:

1. Call 911
2. Move to warm dry area, don't leave person alone.
3. Remove wet or tight clothing that may cut off blood flow to the affected area.
4. DO NOT rub the affected area, because rubbing causes damage to the skin and tissue.

Hypothermia Recognition:

Occurs when normal body temperature (98.6F drops to or below 95F). Fatigue or drowsiness, uncontrolled shivering, cool bluish skin, slurred speech, clumsy movements, irritable, irrational or confused behavior.

Hypothermia Emergency Care:

1. Call 911
2. Move person to warm dry area
3. Don't leave alone
4. Remove any wet clothing and cover with warm clothing / blanket
5. If possible provide warm sweet drinks like a sports drink
6. DO NOT provide drinks with caffeine or alcohol.
7. DO NOT rub the person's body or pour warm water on them as that can cause their heart to stop.