



# SAFETY & HEALTH SHARE

## Cold Injuries & Illness Card *Don't Let the Cold Catch You Off Guard*

For those working in cold environments, winter can pose unique challenges and health risks. This tool is a compact, easy-to-use resource that can help identify potential cold-related injuries and illnesses before they become serious.

### PREVENT COLD INJURIES/ILLNESSES

#### WHAT IS A COLD WEATHER INJURY/ILLNESS?

Over exposure of a body part to cold, ranging mild- life threatening. Severity depends on what tissue layers are involved.

#### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

CHANGES IN SKIN COLOR/SENSATION	POOR JUDGEMENT	DISCOMFORT, SHIVERING, NUMBNESS
DEVELOPMENT OF LESIONS/BLISTERS	HARDENING OF EXTREMITY	CLUMSY MOVEMENT

### PREVENTING COLD INJURIES/ILLNESSES - TO DO

- KEEP HANDS AND FEET DRY. AVOID TIGHT FITTING CLOTHING WHICH COULD DECREASE CIRCULATION. WEAR WATERPROOF SHOES.
- DRESS IN MULTIPLE LAYERS. PACK AN EXTRA CHANGE OF CLOTHES SO YOU MAY REMOVE WET GARMETS IF NECESSARY.
- USE THE BUDDY SYSTEM - MONITOR YOUR PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AND THAT OF YOUR CO-WORKERS.
- ENSURE ACCESS TO EMERGENCY SURVIVAL KIT (MATCHES, BLANKETS, 2400 CALORIE SNACKS, FLASHLIGHT, WATER, ETC.).
- MOVE INTO WARM LOCATIONS DURING BREAKS; LIMIT YOUR AMOUNT OF TIME OUTDOORS.
- STAY HYDRATED. AVOID ALCOHOL, CAFFEINE, & SMOKING.

### PREVENTING COLD RELATED ILLNESS - DO NOT

- DO NOT THAW SITE IF RISK OF RE-FREEZING. DO NOT EXPOSE SITE TO A FIRE OR STOVE.
- DO NOT USE THE AFFECTED LIMB UNTIL RE-WARMED UNDER MEDICAL MONITORING.
- DO NOT MASSAGE AN AFFECTED AREA.
- DO NOT SOAK IN COLD WATER.

### ACT FAST - TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

#### IF THE WORKER IS NOT ALERT, FIRST CALL 911, THEN NOTIFY AXIOM.

- MOVE WORKER TO A WARM, DRY AREA.
- REMOVE WET CLOTHING, IF NECESSARY.
- IMMEDIATELY CONTACT AXIOM AT 877.502.9466 TO REPORT THE EMPLOYEE'S CONDITION.

#### REMINDER - RISK INCREASES WITH:

- EXISTING HEALTH CONDITIONS: HEART DISEASE, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, DIABETES.
- TAKING CERTAIN MEDICATIONS.
- POOR PHYSICAL CONDITION, POOR DIET OR INCREASING AGE.

Acknowledgement to  Axiom Medical

DA Varwig for SCNWO

*When the winter chill sets in, personal protective equipment (PPE) becomes the crucial shield standing between workers and the season's unforgiving assault.*

## ANSI/ISEA 201-2019 (being considered for renewal)

### Standard for Insulation and Wash Durability Classification of Apparel Used in Cold Work Environments

Clothing ensembles worn in cold temperature environments must meet a number of requirements in order to minimize injuries and illnesses.

It must provide the required level of insulation for comfort and protection of the wearer in the exposure environment. The clothing must maintain the level of "as new" performance reasonably throughout the expected useful lifetime of the garment or ensemble.

In addition, the garment's other performance properties such as warmth to weight, thickness to weight, warmth to thickness, breathability, and bending modulus must be considered to optimize the ensemble for comfort and performance in the chosen activity.



**Focus:** Classifies apparel items like jackets and pants meant for cold work environments based on their thermal insulation capabilities.

**Testing criteria:** Includes testing for thermal insulation (measured in "clo" units) and how well insulation properties resist degradation from washing.

**Application:** Helps employers select appropriate cold weather workwear based on the specific working conditions and activity levels.

### PPE for winter protection consists of:

- **Insulated Gloves:** Modern cold-weather gloves feature advanced insulation materials like Thinsulate™ that trap heat without adding excessive bulk, enabling workers to handle tools and equipment with precision. Depending on the intended application, workers may also require gloves with waterproof and windproof outer layers, polyurethane or nitrile coatings, and breathable liners to protect against windchill while reducing sweat buildup.
- **Thermal Jackets:** High-quality jackets feature multilayer insulation that provides superior warmth while incorporating breathable materials to wick away moisture and prevent sweat from creating chills. For those working at heights, lightweight thermal jackets with a slimmer profile and features, such as reinforced elbows + rip-resistant materials, enable freedom of movement while enhancing protection.
- **Winter Work Boots:** For workers trudging through wet or snowy terrain, boots with waterproof membranes like Gore-Tex® are necessary. Optional insulated linings, anti-slip soles and steel or composite toe caps offer workers additional warmth, grip and protection.
- **Face and Head Protection:** Protecting the face and neck is critical in freezing temperatures, as any exposed skin is highly susceptible to frostbite. Balaclavas, neck gaiters and insulated helmet liners made from windproof and moisture-wicking materials provide excellent protection from biting winds.
- **High-Visibility Gear:** Winter often brings reduced visibility, whether from earlier sunsets, fog or snowstorms. Winter gear with reflective materials and fluorescent colors ensures workers remain visible to colleagues and passing vehicles even in low-light and low-vis environments.
- Another consideration as PPE is **rechargeable heated workwear**, (e.g. heated hand warmers, glove liners and vests), that are designed to keep certain areas of the body warm for extended periods.
- Finally, for **Winter PPE fit is everything**. Gear that's too loose or tight can be counterproductive. Oversized gloves let in icy air, making it harder to grip tools securely. Similarly, ill-fitting boots can cause blisters, slips or falls.

David A. Varwig, CSP-retired and SCNWO Board Member





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