

News & Notes

WINTER'S ICY GRIP

The Weather Channel calls them the "Frigid Five:" Barrow, AK; International Falls, MN.; Gunnison, CO.; Jackson, WY; and Caribou, ME.

You may not live in one of America's five coldest cities, but that doesn't mean you don't have to protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia. Both conditions are caused by excessive exposure to low temperatures, wind or moisture and can occur anywhere these conditions exist.

Cold weather can be dangerous for anyone who enjoys outdoor winter sports, and people who work outdoors during winter must be particularly mindful of the risks.

Before venturing outside in winter, be sure to:

Check the temperature and limit your time outdoors if it's very cold, wet or windy.

Bundle up in several layers of loose clothing.

Wear brightly colored or reflective clothing to make yourself visible to others.

Wear mittens rather than gloves.

Cover your ears with a warm hat.

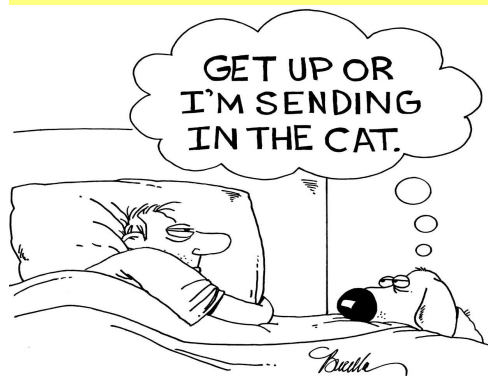
Wear socks that will keep your feet warm and dry.

Wear footwear with non-slip or non-skid treads that protect your feet from the elements.

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

Driving in snow means facing a multitude of tests. First, there is the test in humility. No matter how good a driver you are, winter driving requires you to slow down. Second is the test in patience. You want so bad to get to where you have to go. But you have no choice but to keep a longer following distance from the vehicle in front of you. Third is the test in colors. If you don't know the color of black ice, you're more likely to skid on the road.

These and more make driving on ice- and snow-covered roads a tough ordeal for both rookie and experienced drivers.



RIDDLES OF THE MONTH

- 1) Everyone in the world needs it, but they usually give it without taking it. What is it?
- 2) What can you hold without touching it at all?
- 3) What gets sharper the more you use it?
- 4) What belongs to you but gets used by everyone else more than you?

Answers on Page 2 Safety Bits and Pieces

Safety Matters

Happy New Year 2019

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7 Tips to Prevent Hypothermia and Frostbite

Here are seven safety tips to prevent cold stress or cold-induced illnesses or injuries:

1. Employees must recognize cold and changing weather condition dangers -

Training is a timeless necessity in the workplace. In these colder days, workers must be trained not only about cold-induced illnesses and injuries, but also to determine environmental or work site conditions that may cause cold stress. They should be especially trained in recognizing the signs and symptoms of cold stress or cold-induced injuries like hypothermia and frostbite.

Here are signs and symptoms of hypothermia: Cool skin; Slower, irregular breathing; Slower heartbeat; Weak pulse; Uncontrollable shivering; Severe shaking; Rigid muscles; Drowsiness; Exhaustion; Slurred speech; Memory lapses.

The following are signs and symptoms of frostbite: Paleness of the skin; Sensation of coldness or pain; Pain disappears after a while with the freezing of the tissues; Tissues become increasingly whiter and harder.

2. Use a buddy system - Sure, you may want to be left to yourself while working but this is not the time to enjoy solitude while accomplishing your tasks outdoors. You don't want to be working one minute and thawing your fingers the next.

So get a partner and work on monitoring each other for signs of cold stress. Don't be stubborn because most of the time, it's difficult to determine danger signs when you only have yourself to rely on.

3. Adjust your work schedule to the cold or changing weather - Don't punish yourself too much. Just because you have to work outside and it feels like stepping into a walk-in freezer, it doesn't mean you have to bask in the frigid winds all day.

Schedule work during the warmest part of the day. Break a task into shifts so you can take frequent, short breaks in warm dry shelters.

4. Layer clothing - At this time of the year, the saying "less is more" surely does not hold true. Well, maybe partly true since wearing less clothes means getting exposed to more cold-stress-related threats.

Remember that it's better to go for several thin layers of clothing instead of wearing just a couple of thick layers. For clothes next to the skin, choose those with synthetic fabrics to avoid absorption of sweat. An ideal choice is polypropylene. For your outer layer, choose fabrics made of waterproof and wind-resistant material.

5. Wear complete Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - You know you need it. Wear warm gloves, hats and hoods. In extreme conditions, don a warm woolen hood that covers your neck, head and ears. If you get hot while working, just open your jacket. Don't remove your hat and gloves. The key is in wearing clothing that can be adjusted to changing conditions.

Avoid wearing tight-fitting footwear as this restricts blood flow. Your shoes or boots should allow you to wear either one thick or two thin pairs of socks.

6. Eat and drink hot or warm foods and liquids - You might have to say goodbye to hot coffee and cocoa for a while. Do not drink caffeinated and alcoholic beverages while working in cold weather. Instead, go for warm, sweet beverages like sports drinks and sugar water. Keep in mind that you are also at risk of dehydration under cold weather so make it a habit to drink up.

Good news, though. You can feast on hot pasta dishes, soups and other foods rich in calories. Remember, though, that if you're sick or under medication, you are more at risk to get cold stress. This is especially true if you have hypertension, diabetes or a cardiovascular disease.

7. Wear eye protection - Ice or snow + excessive ultraviolet rays = eye injury. Yes, this is one proven equation. Before working outside, check first if you may be exposed to glare or, worse, blowing ice crystals. If conditions point to the affirmative, then wear the correct type of eye protection.

Safety Bits & Pieces

SNOW SHOVELING TIPS

When snowmagedon hits, don't make it worse by shoveling. The 4,000 souls who live in Hancock, Michigan probably know to get their snowblowers out before winter drops the usual 200 inches on them. But those in less flaky climes, when a storm drops six inches of snow, are probably going to get out a snow shovel one morning.

Think first!!!

Just don't shovel snow if you are 45 or over. According to Popular Science, shoveling snow isn't mere exercise. It is uniquely challenging to the heart, causing blood pressure to rise and oxygen to drop. In addition, it is done in the cold, which means an increased chance of heart blood vessel constriction.

Don't imagine you are protected because you are a jogger or runner. **The demands put on the heart while shoveling snow are much higher than with those activities.**

Still, it is better to be in shape than out of shape when you shovel snow.

If you absolutely must shovel snow, then follow these guidelines:

1. Warm up with some light stretching and movement.
2. Don't smoke! You are going to need all the oxygen your body can get.
3. Eat lightly before shoveling. Large meals put a strain on your heart.
4. Dress in layers.
5. Take your time when shoveling. Plan to stop shoveling frequently. Go in and get warm.
6. Push the snow, don't lift it.
7. If you must lift snow, at least use a small shovel. Those wide shovels are best for pushing. Use a small, steel shovel. Don't constantly try to throw snow. Instead, turn small amounts over in a pile.
8. Don't drink alcohol before or after shoveling.
9. Consider buying a snow blower instead.

YOUR CAR'S EMERGENCY KIT

If you live in, or expect to drive through, an area that suffers from winter weather (including freezing temperatures, snow and ice), your emergency kit should include these items:

- First aid kit
- Essential medications
- Flares or reflectors to signal for help and warn other drivers
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries
- Jumper cables
- Snow and ice scraper
- Snow brush
- Survival blanket or sleeping bag
- Tire chains and/or tow straps
- Extra set of winter clothes
- Snow shovel
- Non-clumping kitty litter/sand for traction

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH ANSWERS:

- 1) Advice
- 2) A conversation
- 3) Your brain
- 4) Your name

TREATING FROSTBITE AND HYPOTHERMIA

Frostbite

Even skin that is protected can be subject to frostbite. It's the most common injury resulting from exposure to severe cold, and it usually occurs on the nose, fingers, toes, ears, cheeks and chin. If caught early, it is possible to prevent permanent damage. If not, frostbite can lead to amputation.

Superficial frostbite affects the skin surface, while the underlying tissue remains soft. The skin appears white, waxy or grayish-yellow and is cold and numb.

If the condition is allowed to progress to deep frostbite, all layers of the skin are affected and the outcome likely will be more serious. The skin will become completely numb, blisters may form and eventually the skin tissue dies and turns black.

If you suspect frostbite:

Get indoors immediately

Seek medical attention

Remove constrictive clothing and jewelry that could impair circulation

Place dry, sterile gauze between toes and fingers to absorb moisture and keep them from sticking together

Elevate the affected area to reduce pain and swelling

For superficial frostbite, you may also place the affected area in water that is 100 to 105 degrees until the tissue softens

Hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when the body's temperature drops below 95 degrees. Severe shivering, one of the first signs of hypothermia, is beneficial in keeping the body warm. But as hypothermia progresses, shivering gives way to drowsiness or exhaustion, confusion, shallow breathing, irregular heartbeat, slurred speech, loss of coordination and, eventually, unconsciousness and even death.

In one of the most bizarre symptoms of hypothermia, "paradoxical undressing," a person actually undresses instead of bundling up. Researchers believe that in the final throes of hypothermia, a person may feel like he or she is overheating due to a rush of warm blood to the extremities.

So what should you do if you encounter someone suffering from hypothermia?

Move the victim inside and remove any wet clothing

Call for medical attention immediately

Add blankets, pillows, towels or newspapers beneath and around the victim

Cover the victim's head

Handle the victim gently to avoid cardiac arrest

Keep the victim in a horizontal position

If necessary, give CPR

None of these steps are a substitute for proper medical care. Be sure to seek medical attention for frostbite and hypothermia as soon as possible.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...



"Dad, did the stork bring me or did you get me in a fantasy draft?"

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

We spend January 1 walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives...not looking for flaws, but for potential.

ELLEN GOODMAN

PROPER SHOVELING TECHNIQUES



Using an ergonomically correct shovel, bend low at the knees.

Scoop and lift upward with your legs. Do not lift with your back!

Turn sideways without twisting your back. Point your feet in the direction you are throwing, and toss the snow.

If snow is deeper than one foot, use your shovel as a blade to chop it down before shoveling it up.