

Company Name: _____ Dept: _____ Location: _____ Date: _____

#072

OFFICE SAFETY – COLD STRESS

Working under cold conditions can lead to various injuries or health effects, which are collectively known as cold stress. Workers may experience cold stress when working:

- Outdoors on a cold day.
- In a refrigerated room.
- In an unheated building.
- In cold water, rain, or snow.
- While handling cold objects or materials.

The hazardous effects of cold on the body may include dehydration, numbness, shivering, frostbite, immersion foot (trench foot), and hypothermia. Hazards associated with cold stress are categorized into systemic and local effects. Local effects impact the part of the body where the exposure to cold is the greatest. Systemic effects impact more than just the local area and can affect the whole body.

Numbness, frostbite, and immersion foot are all local effects. Immersion foot is the result of the skin's having been exposed too long to cold and dampness. Immersion foot can result in swelling, tingling, itching, loss of skin, or skin ulcers. Hypothermia is the most serious effect of cold stress. Once the body loses the ability to maintain its normal temperature, the body temperature lowers, and other symptoms such as violent shivering, slow or slurred speech, confusion, hallucinations, a weak and irregular pulse, or unconsciousness occurs. Certain people are more susceptible than others to cold stress. People who are not physically fit, have a chronic illness, drink alcohol or take drugs (including prescription drugs), are wet or damp from work or weather, are fatigued, are exposed to vibration from tools, don't wear the right clothing, or are not used to working in cold have a higher risk from cold stress.

Shivering is the body's response to cold stress and serves as a protection mechanism by increasing the rate of metabolism. Be on guard for cold stress if workers are shivering because it's a good sign of cold stress and possible hypothermia. Subjective responses of workers provide a good tool for recognizing cold stress in the workplace. Worker behaviors that may indicate cold stress exposures include seeking warm locations, adding layers of clothing, or increasing the work rate. Employers can help protect workers from cold stress by providing training on cold stress.

Meeting Conducted By:

Print Name

Signature

Meeting Attended By:

Notes & Suggestions

Document Filing Reference