

How to Manage Working in Cold Conditions

Winter brings harsh, cold weather, but construction projects still need to be done. Working outside in winter might be unavoidable at times, but many methods can be used to stay safe and reduce the risks that cold conditions can present.

The risk of cold injury can be minimised through proper equipment design, safety work practices and appropriate clothing. Following these guidelines can help reduce the risks of working in cold weather:

- **Equipment design**—For work below the freezing point (0 degrees Celsius), metal handles and bars should be covered by thermal insulating materials. Machines and tools should also be designed to be operated without having to remove mittens or gloves.
- **Surveillance and monitoring**—Every workplace where the temperature may fall below 16 degrees Celsius should be equipped with a suitable thermometer to monitor further temperature changes. The temperature should be checked at least every four hours in colder workplaces with temperatures below the freezing point. In outdoor workplaces, both air temperature and wind speeds should be noted.
- **Emergency procedures**—Procedures for administering first aid and obtaining medical care should be clearly outlined. For each shift, at least one trained person should be assigned the responsibility of attending to emergencies.
- **Education**—Everyone on a cold-environment job site should be informed about the symptoms and adverse effects of exposure to cold, proper clothing habits, safe work practices, physical fitness requirements for work in the cold and emergency procedures in case of cold injury. While working in the cold, a buddy system should be implemented to look out for one another and recognize symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite.

To learn more about construction site safety, contact your local advisor today.



LET US HELP YOU MANAGE YOUR RISK

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