

Cold Stress



Toolbox Talk #43

What is Cold Stress?

Cold stress occurs when the human body is exposed to severe temperatures and can no longer sustain a normal temperature. Cold stress causes the body to work harder to maintain its temperature due to heat being drawn from the body at such an abnormal rate. When pinpointing the causes of cold stress multiple variables must be taken into consideration such as wind speed, wetness, and as mentioned earlier low temperatures. Cold stress can result in serious illness, tissue damage and even death so it is important that you are aware of the warning signs of cold stress.

Signs of Cold Stress?

Immersion and Foot Trench

- Reddening skin, tingling, pain, swelling, leg cramps, numbness, and blisters

Frost Bite

- Reddened skin develops gray/white patches in the fingers, toes, nose, or ear lobes; tingling, aching, a loss of feeling, firm/hard, and blisters may occur in the affected areas

Hypothermia

- Uncontrollably shivering, loss of coordination, confusion, slurred speech, heart rate/breathing slow, unconsciousness

How to prevent Cold Stress?

- ✚ Monitor Your Physical Condition
- ✚ Dress Appropriately For the Cold, 3 Layers of Loose Fitting Clothing
- ✚ Inner Layer of Wool , Middle Layer of wool, Silk, or Polypropylene; Middle Layer of Wool or Synthetic to Provide Insulation When Wet, Outer Layer Wind and Rain Proof Protection Later that Allows Ventilation to Prevent Overheating
- ✚ Stay Dry in the Cold Because Moisture or Dampness, e.g. From Sweating, Can Increase the Rate of Heat Loss From the Body
- ✚ Keep Extra Clothing Handy In Case You Get Wet and need To Change
- ✚ Stay dry in the cold because moisture or dampness, e.g. from sweating, Can Increase the Rate of Heat Loss From the Body
- ✚ Drink Plenty of Liquids, and Avoid Caffeine
- ✚ Shield Work Area From Drafts or Wind



Information Retrieved from Occupational Safety and Health Administration

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