

Working in the cold: layers and limits

Cold, wind and wet clothing steal body heat quickly. Numb hands and slowed thinking also raise the risk of other injuries.

Key points

- In B.C. employers must assess cold stress where workers may be exposed, and put an exposure control plan in place.
- Dress in layers: a wicking base layer, an insulating middle layer and a wind- and water-resistant outer layer.
- Keep spare dry gloves, socks and a hat. Wet clothing loses most of its insulating value.
- Warning signs of hypothermia include shivering, clumsiness, slurred speech and confusion. Frostbite shows as numb, pale or waxy skin.
- Workers showing symptoms must be removed from the cold and treated. Get medical help for severe symptoms.
- Plan warm-up breaks and a warm place to take them, and take extra care on slippery surfaces and when handling cold metal.

Ask the crew

- Where can we warm up and dry out today?
- Who is working alone or in an exposed spot?
- Do we have spare dry clothing on site?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, ss. 7.33 to 7.38 (cold stress) (Part 7 Noise, Vibration, Radiation and Temperature)

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-07-noise-vibration-radiation-and-temperature>

Your site's own procedures and the equipment manufacturer's instructions always apply. This sheet is general information, not legal advice.

Sign-off sheet

Date: _____ Location: _____ Presented by: _____

Name (print)	Signature	Date