



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



Cold Stress Safety Message

Cold weather and environments pose many hazards to employees who work in these conditions. A cold environment forces the body to work harder to maintain its temperature. An environment that is considered “cold” depends on the region of the country and the individual. Each unique situation needs to be analyzed and addressed individually to keep employees safe.

Cold Stress Health Hazards (source: www.cdc.gov)

Frostbite - is an injury to the body that is caused by freezing. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and color in the affected areas. It most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes. Frostbite can lead to permanent damage or amputation of the affected areas.

Trench foot also known as immersion foot - is an injury of the feet resulting from prolonged exposure to wet and cold winter weather safety conditions. Trench foot can occur at temperatures as high as 60 degrees F if the feet are constantly wet. Wet feet lose heat 25 times faster than dry feet. To prevent heat loss, the body constricts blood vessels to shut down circulation in the feet. Skin tissue begins to die because of lack of oxygen and nutrients and due to the buildup of toxic products.

Hypothermia— When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up your body’s stored energy. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature.