

PLAYING IT SAFE



The Cold Stress Equation - Frostbite

What cold temperatures mean for your safety

Cold-related injuries and illnesses can slowly overcome a person who has been chilled by low temperatures, brisk winds or wet clothing. This dangerous combination is known as The Cold Stress Equation, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

When frostbite occurs, there is freezing in the deep layers of the skin and tissue. The skin becomes pale, waxy-white, hard and numb. This condition usually affects the fingers, hands, toes, feet, ears and nose. If you suspect that a co-worker has frostbite, do the following:

- Move the person to a warm, dry area. Do not leave him or her alone.
- Remove any wet or tight clothing that may cut off blood flow to the affected area.
- DO NOT rub the affected skin, as this can cause damage to the skin and tissue.
- Gently place the affected area in warm water (105° F) to slowly warm the tissue. Do not pour warm water directly on the skin because it may warm the tissue too fast and cause damage. Warming the skin generally takes about 25 to 40 minutes.
- After the affected area has been warmed, it may become puffy and blister, accompanied by a burning

sensation or numbness. When normal movement, feeling and skin color have returned, dry the affected area and keep it warm.

- If the affected area could get cold again, do not warm the skin. Should the skin be warmed and then become cold a second time, there could be severe tissue damage.

With all frostbite cases, the injured person should seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Occupational Safeguard

Safety is both your responsibility and the responsibility of your employer. Keep these recommendations in mind to avoid cold weather injuries and illnesses:

- Recognize environmental and workplace conditions that may lead to potential cold-induced ailments.
- Learn the symptoms of cold-induced ailments as well as what to do to help others or yourself.
- Select proper clothing for cold, wet and windy conditions. Layer clothing to adjust to changing temperatures and wear a hat, gloves and underwear that will keep water away from the skin.
- Take frequent, short breaks in warm, dry shelters to allow the body to warm up.

Be safe and healthy on the job at **American Trust Insurance** with these helpful tips provided by **American Trust Insurance**.

When in a cold environment, your body keeps internal organs warm by increasing blood flow to the core and decreasing blood flow to extremities. As a result, you're at an elevated risk for frostbite.

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