

Cold Weather Safety

Cold weather is quickly coming upon us. Preventative measures can reduce the risk of a dangerous situation. When you are unable to warm yourself, serious cold injuries are likely to occur. Permanent tissue and death may result. The following winter related conditions can occur:

- Hypothermia (Medical Emergency):
 - Can slowly occur when temperatures are above freezing or water temperatures are less than 98.6 degrees. Your body temperature drops below 95 degrees.
- Frost Bite:
 - When any part of the body is exposed to excessive exposure to extreme cold. Freezing in deep layers of the skin and tissue. It usually attacks the hands, fingers, toes, feet ears, and nose.

Sign and Symptoms:

- Hypothermia:
 - Uncontrolled shivering, fatigue, drowsiness, problems walking, cold skin, confusion, difficulty speaking, awkward movements, and irritability.
- Frost Bite:
 - Pale skin color, skin is hard and numb, stiffness, pain, blisters, and swelling.

Treatment:

- Hypothermia:
 - Call for emergency help.
 - Move the person to a warm, dry place.
 - Remove all wet clothing. Replace with dry clothing or blankets.
 - Have the person drink warm drinks (avoid drinks with caffeine).
 - Move their arms and legs if possible to create muscle heat. If they are unable, place hot packs or warm bottles near the arm pits, groin, neck, and head.
 - Do not place the person in a warm bath or rub the person's body. These actions can stop their heart.
- Frost Bite:
 - Call for emergency help.
 - Move the person to a warm, dry place.
 - Remove all wet or tight clothing.

- Place cold area in warm water to slowly warm the tissue. Once warm, dry and wrap the area to keep it warm.
- Do not pour warm water directly on affected area and do not rub the affected area.

Remember, cold related illness and injury can occur at mild temperatures. It is important to dress appropriately, recognize the symptoms early, seek a warm environment and get appropriate medical care.

References

osha.gov

nsc.org

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