8 ways to limit cold weather exposures for outdoor workers.



As the temperatures drop, companies can't drop everything and wait for spring to continue working. People rely on your business. Deadlines must be met. So, to help companies and team members stay safe throughout even the most frigid temperatures and severe conditions, business owners need to plan for cold weather exposures.

That planning should start with safety. Implement workplace policies and practices for winter, such as adjusted break times, bundling up, and these additional tips:

1. **Wear the right winter attire.** At least three layers of loose-fitting clothing are advised for outdoor jobsites in winter. Thermal clothing, water-repellent and insulated jackets, and wool socks can hold in more heat than cotton. In addition to clothes, team members should also have warm head, neck, and hand coverings and insulated boots. Providing your team with supplier resources, or extending some items for free, such as a company-logoed jacket, are good ways to ensure they have the right attire for the job.

2. **Bring a change of clothes.** If a team member's clothes become wet due to sweat or the elements, they should keep a spare outfit on hand. Employees should promptly remove wet layers and switch into the spare clothes to retain body heat.

3. **Stay hydrated.** It's easy to become dehydrated in cold weather. But hydration is essential to staying healthy on the job. Be diligent about getting the standard daily fluids and avoid too much caffeine, which can cause further dehydration.

4. **Learn the signs of hypothermia.** The CDC reports hypothermia can look like shivering, confusion, fatigue, memory loss, slurred speech, or fumbling hands in adults. If you recognize any of these

symptoms in a team member, get medical attention immediately. In the meantime, move them to a warmer indoor location, remove damp layers of clothing, and cover the individual with a blanket to start the warming process.

5. **Adjust the work schedule.** If possible, adjust your team's work schedule to avoid the cold or frosty morning hours and evening darkness. Encourage breaks for added warmth throughout their shift.

6. **Spread the warmth.** Consider adding wind shields, warming shelters, or heating devices on-site as your location and line of work permit.

7. **Use the buddy system.** The buddy system is an effective worksite strategy every day, but especially on winter days. Assign each team member a colleague to check in with and regularly check up on.

8. **Provide team training.** Because it can be difficult to recognize signs of hypothermia and cold stress in oneself, train supervisors and team leaders to spot the signs and symptoms amongst the team. Supervisors should also monitor and enforce breaks and ensure proper winter protection like gloves are worn at all times.

At the end of the day, having a safe and healthy workforce will keep your business running smoothly. After you've put these tips in action, protect your company year-round with comprehensive business insurance. Talk to a local, independent agent about our policies today.