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Safety Focused



The most common causes of hypothermia are exposure to cold weather and immersion in cold water.

Presented by Universal Group

First Aid for Hypothermia

When working outdoors in cold weather conditions, the risk for hypothermia rises. This risk is particularly apparent for recreational workers, snow cleanup crews, construction workers, police officers, firefighters and similar occupations that may regularly work outside in colder months. As such, it's important to understand how to keep yourself and others as safe as possible in these conditions.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can be produced and the normal body temperature (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit) drops to or below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Hypothermia can occur when a person is exposed to extremely cold temperatures or even at mild temperatures (above 40 degrees Fahrenheit) if a person becomes cold due to rain, sweat or submersion in frigid water. Common symptoms of hypothermia include:

- Shivering
- Exhaustion
- Confusion
- Memory loss
- Slurred speech
- Drowsiness

Hypothermia can be life-threatening and, in some cases, result in death if it's not treated in a timely manner. Thankfully, there are a number of steps to follow if you think you or a co-worker are experiencing hypothermia:

- Call 911.
- Move to a warm, dry area.
- Remove any wet clothing and replace it with dry clothing.
- Wrap the entire body in layers of blankets and a vapor barrier (e.g., a tarp or garbage bag).

In order to prevent hypothermia when working outdoors, follow these tips:

- **Dress in layers**—Wear loose-fitting, layered clothing—such as long pants, a long-sleeve shirt, a hat and boots to protect yourself from the cold.
- **Get plenty of fuel**—You need fluids and food to fuel your body and keep you warm while you work.
- **Know the signs**—Shivering, exhaustion and confusion are serious signs of hypothermia. Be sure to move to a warmer area and notify your supervisor if these symptoms occur.

If you have any questions about working safely in extreme cold, talk to your supervisor.



The Importance of Workplace Hygiene

Given the severity of recent health hazards like COVID-19, good workplace hygiene is essential to keeping yourself and your co-workers healthy. This is particularly important when you consider that workplaces are often crowded with large amounts of people working together in close quarters. In these instances, if one employee is not maintaining good hygiene, illnesses can easily spread throughout the workplace.

As an employee, maintaining good hygiene can help ensure the health and safety of customers, visitors and other staff. Additionally, by practicing good hygiene, you are doing your part to promote a happier, healthier and more productive workplace.

Ways to Ensure Workplace Hygiene

To ensure good workplace hygiene, consider the following:

- **Maintain a clean workstation**—Cleaning your workstation with an alcohol-based cleanser helps reduce bacterial contamination, which is especially important during cold and flu season.
- **Uphold good personal hygiene**—This includes frequent grooming and showering to ensure that you're ready to work alongside your co-workers.
- **Keep restroom facilities clean**—Be sure to wash your hands, clean up any spills or messes you may have left behind and let a supervisor know if the restroom is not up to standard.

Above all, according to the CDC, washing your hands is one of the best ways to remove germs, reduce your risk of getting sick and prevent spreading germs to others.

For the best results, follow these hand-washing steps:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water.
- Lather your hands together with soap.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse your hands under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using paper towel or drying equipment.

If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. While this is not the top recommended option, sanitizer can significantly reduce the number of germs on your hands when soap and water are not available.

For additional workplace hygiene guidance, consult your supervisor.