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# Safety Focused



When working in environments with ice, snow, sleet, cold temperatures or high winds, the risk of developing cold stress rises.

Presented by

## The Risks of Cold Stress

Workers who are required to work outdoors in cold environments for an extended period of time may be at risk for cold stress. Weather extremes, such as high winds, cold temperatures, ice, snow, sleet and freezing rain, present potential hazards to workers. Specifically, cold stress can contribute to:

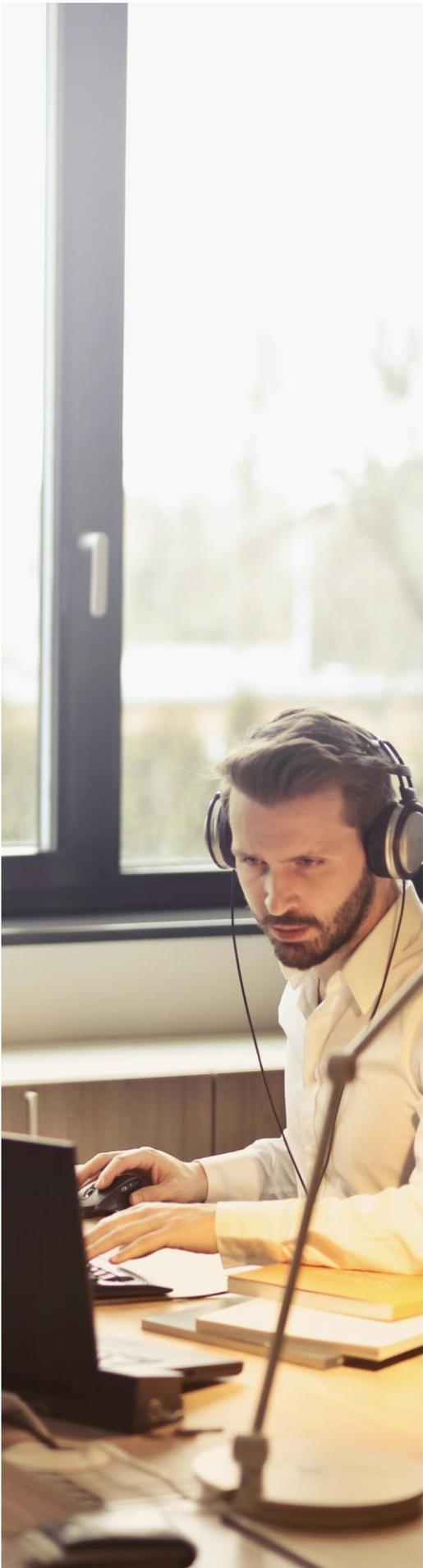
- **Hypothermia** occurs when your body heat is lost faster than it can be replaced and your normal body temperature drops to less than 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Symptoms include shivering, fatigue, dilated pupils, blue skin, and a slowed pulse and breathing.
- **Frostbite** is an injury to the body that is caused by freezing of the skin and underlying tissues. Symptoms include reduced blood flow to the hands and feet, numbness, aching and waxy or blistered skin.
- **Trench foot** is caused by prolonged exposure to wet and cold temperatures. Symptoms include numbness, leg cramps, swelling, blisters and ulcers.

## What Can Workers Do?

To protect yourself whenever you're working outdoors in extreme cold, consider doing the following:

- Wear several layers of loose clothing to provide insulation.
- Make sure to protect your ears, face, hands and feet.
- Move into warm locations during work breaks.
- Limit the amount of time you spend outside.
- Include a thermometer and chemical hot packs in your first-aid kit.
- Avoid touching cold metal surfaces with your bare skin.

If you have any additional questions or concerns regarding cold stress safety at work, consult your supervisor.



## Why Proper Lighting in the Workplace Is Important

Lighting ergonomics plays a key role when completing tasks in the workplace. Appropriate lighting can reduce eye fatigue and headaches, which makes completing tasks easier. In particular, good lighting ergonomics can prevent computer vision syndrome (CVS), which is a type of eye strain that occurs when you use a computer for a long period of time. CVS symptoms include:

- Blurred and double vision
- Eye irritation (e.g., dry and red eyes)
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Back and neck pain

The quality of lighting in your workplace can significantly impact your productivity. Notably, the type of lighting you need is based on the type of work you are doing and the location of your computer—every worker requires a unique amount of light. As such, it's important to design your workstation to fit your individual needs, accounting for the following common lighting issues.

### **Bright Lights**

Bright lights shining around your screen can make it difficult to read or see the work you are doing. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration recommends the following to help protect your eyes and improve your work conditions:

- Turn off some of the fluorescent bulbs above your work area, or have them removed.
- Use task lighting to illuminate writing and reading tasks as well as limit brightness around your monitor.
- Use glare guards to reduce or eliminate glare on your screen.

### **Excessive Background Lighting**

Excessive background lighting can create contrast on your screen, which can strain your eyes. Possible solutions include:

- Moving your computer so that sources of light are at right angles to your computer screen
- Using blinds or drapes on the windows to eliminate light

### **Reflected Light**

Reflected light from the overhead lights or other surfaces, such as keyboards or walls, can create a glare and affect your ability to see your screen. Possible solutions for reflected light include:

- Tilting your monitor down to prevent the reflected light from hitting your computer
- Selecting a matte-finished keyboard

Talk to your supervisor if you have concerns about lighting at work.