

# Cold Weather Precautions

*This Everyday Safety Tailgate Talk was originally published as the January 2016 “Safety Pins” by Philip E. Spiezio, Safety Officer, Washington County Office of the Safety Officer*

The four environmental conditions that cause cold-related stress are low temperatures, wind, dampness, and cold water. Two or more of these conditions together can make working outdoors very dangerous.



Here are a few tips to keep in mind when working outdoors in cold weather:

- Wear appropriate protective clothing—Dress in layers
- An outer layer to protect against moisture and wind, middle layers designed to trap body heat and absorb perspiration yet still provide good insulation like wool or synthetic fabric and an inner layer of cotton or synthetic weave, to allow for ventilation to ensure that perspiration is not as likely to be trapped near your skin. Pay special attention to protecting your feet, hands, face, and head. Up to 40 percent of your body heat can be lost when your head is not protected properly.
- Eat high calorie foods and drink liquids that do not contain caffeine or alcohol when working outside in cold temperatures.
- Take frequent short breaks, avoid exhaustion or fatigue as energy is needed to keep your body warm as well.
- When possible, work during the warmest part of the day.
- Work in pairs, when the weather is very cold and windy.
- Seek warmth when you first start to feel the early signs of your body getting cold.
- Keep in mind that even at 10 degrees with a wind speed of twenty miles per hour—exposed skin can freeze in as little time as 1 minute.

**Action Item:**

**Related Topics:**

Cold Weather Driving Safety

**Resources and References:**

American Red Cross Safety Tips To Endure Cold Weather

<http://www.redcross.org/news/article/Top-Ten-Red-Cross-Cold-Weather-Safety-Tips>

National Weather Service "Prepare for Cold Weather" Webpage URL

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/cold/before.shtml>

OSHA Cold Weather Safety Portal

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/emergencypreparedness/guides/cold.html>

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