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# Can't This Project Wait Until It Gets Warmer?

*Have you ever been working outdoors in the cold temperatures and asked yourself that very question?*

No matter what time of year it is, projects exist that can be done to improve the golf course. However, Mother Nature will always have the final say. If the decision comes down that the project cannot wait and you need to brave the elements, you need to be equipped with the correct information on how to stay warm.

In a recent Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) press release, OSHA asks all employers and employees to take proper precautions to prevent and treat cold-related injuries. OSHA specifies the construction, fishing and agriculture industries as some that particularly call for these safety measures. Tips include:

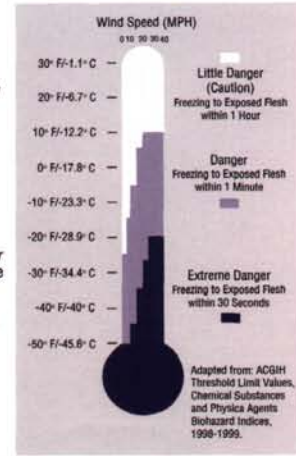
- Train all employees about cold-weather illnesses and/or injuries.
- Try to recognize the working and environmental conditions that may be hazardous.
- If possible, schedule work in the warmest part of the day.
- Encourage workers to dress in layers for all conditions; layers can be altered depending on the changing weather.
- Take short, frequent breaks in warm, enclosed areas.
- The body needs energy to stay warm, so do not work to the point of exhaustion.
- Eat warm, high-calorie and carbohydrate dishes to maintain energy levels, e.g., pasta.
- Avoid drinks that contain caffeine, e.g., coffee, soda, hot chocolate.
- Use the buddy system.

Finally, OSHA reminds us that workers with cardiovascular disease or any other health issues face greater risks of cold-related injuries.

## THE COLD STRESS EQUATION

**LOW TEMPERATURE + WIND SPEED + WETNESS  
= INJURIES & ILLNESS**

When the body is unable to warm itself, serious cold-related illnesses and injuries may occur, and permanent tissue damage and death may result.  
**Hypothermia** can occur when land temperatures are above freezing or water temperatures are below 98.6°F/37°C. Cold-related illnesses can slowly overcome a person who has been chilled by low temperatures, brisk winds, or wet clothing.



Prolonged exposure to cold temperatures can lead to conditions such as frostbite and/or hypothermia. Note the chart, which explains how long it takes given the temperature and wind speed for exposed flesh to become frozen. Furthermore, exposure to water in these situations worsens the circumstances. Danger signs in these instances include: slurred speech, uncontrolled shivering, fatigue and confused behavior. If you observe these signs in yourself or a coworker, seek medical attention immediately.

Safety and health add value to business, to the workplace and to life. Remember, **SAFETY FIRST!**

### References:

29 Code of Federal Regulations  
1910 – General Industry

OSHA Web Site – [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

Lecture Notes. Dr. Gary Erisman –  
Illinois State University