

## HEALTH AND SAFETY ALERT N°14

# WORKING IN SNOW AND ICY CONDITIONS



During the winter months it is a time to be cautious, conditions on the site become more dangerous now more than any other time of year.

Snow and ice heightens the risk of injury with the likelihood hazard of slips trips or falls highest.

Like any unsafe condition on the job, snow and ice accumulation can be eliminated by following basic guidelines:

- Wear suitable footwear, with a good tread.
- Monitor weather conditions by knowing what the forecast is.
- Don't allow snow and ice to accumulate in work areas. Clear them off immediately, especially scaffolds or work platforms.
- Always clear snow and ice from walkways and entrance steps. Keep de-icing grit close by.
- Use anti-slip materials like sand or salt to make walkways and car parks less slippery.
- Make sure you have a dry set of clothing to change into.
- Ensure you wear clothing to keep you sufficiently warm throughout your shift.
- Before using ladders, ensure that they are completely free of ice, snow and other materials that may cause slips or falls.
- Before using tools and equipment, inspect them well first, make sure they are free from ice and snow.
- Make sure that areas that may have unseen snow or ice are well lit and equipped with directional markings.

### COLD STRESS

When the body is unable to warm itself, cold related stress may result. This may include tissue damage and possibly death. Four factors contribute to cold stress:

Cold air temperatures, high velocity air movement, dampness of the air, and contact with cold water or surfaces.

A cold environment forces the body to work harder to maintain its temperature. Cold air, water, and snow all draw heat from the body.

Wind chill is the combination of air temperature and wind speed. For example, when the air temperature is 4°C, and the wind speed is 35 mph, your exposed skin receives conditions equivalent to the air temperature being -12°C.

### What preventive measures should I take?

Plan for work in cold weather. Wearing appropriate clothing and being aware of how your body is reacting to the cold are important to preventing cold stress. Avoiding alcohol, certain medications and smoking can also help to minimize the risk.

### Treatment

Immediate: Move the IP to warm environment and keep active.

Escalated: If symptoms persist follow the Emergency Plan (SIDME)