



## Working in Winter Weather



Dressing properly is extremely important to preventing cold stress. Different types of fabrics also make a big difference. Cotton loses its insulation value when it becomes wet. Wool, silk and most synthetics, on the other hand, retain their insulation even when wet.

### **Some recommendations for working in cold environments include:**

Wearing at least three layers of loose fitting clothing. Layering provides better insulation. Do not wear tight fitting clothing. Use an inner layer of wool, silk or synthetic to keep moisture away from the body. Then a middle layer of wool or synthetic to provide insulation even when wet. Lastly, an outer layer of protection against wind and rain that allows some ventilation to prevent overheating. Top it off by wearing a hat or hood to help keep your whole body warmer. Hats reduce the amount of body heat that escapes from your head. Use insulated gloves to protect your hands. Wear insulated and waterproof boots to protect your feet.

## **It is very important to allow yourself to get acclimatized to the cold weather.**

The first day out in frigid weather can be hard. It is best to start off slowly and allow your body to get used to the weather. It is also important that you do stretching exercises inside prior to starting the tasks outside. This allows your muscles to warm up appropriately rather than the initial shock of being active in a very cold environment.



## **If possible, schedule heavy work during the warmer part of the day.**

Employers can assign workers to tasks in pairs (buddy system), so that they can monitor each other for signs of cold stress. Workers can be allowed to interrupt their work, if they are extremely uncomfortable. Employers should give workers frequent breaks in warm areas. In addition, be aware:

- Know the symptoms of cold stress.
- Monitor your physical condition and that of your coworkers.
- Stay dry in the cold because moisture or dampness, e.g. from sweating, can increase the rate of heat loss from the body.
- Keep extra clothing handy in case you get wet and need to change
- Always use proper engineering controls, safe work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by your employer.
- Stay warm, stay safe this Winter!! ❄️