Montana Ag Safety Program

Winter Season Safety - Cold

- Dress for the weather! Layers are ideal. Consider the following:
  - A hat (a stocking cap or 'Scotch Cap'), a scarf – or mask, gaiter, buff, etc. – capable of covering your neck, face, and mouth, mittens or gloves, water-resistant insulated coat, water-resistant insulated boots, and several layers of well-fitting clothing. Looser clothes will help retain additional heat but pose significant hazards for entanglement! A "thermal" base layer is a great addition to any outfit. Insulated coveralls, bibs, or pants.
- Shivering is a sign that your body is losing critical heat. If shivering persists, return inside and warm up.
- **Recognize the signs of hypothermia:**
  - Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, drowsiness, very low energy
- Hypothermia can be deadly if not treated quickly. If you notice the signs of hypothermia, take the person's temperature. Any temperature below 95° is a medical emergency. Take the following actions:
  - Get the person to a warmer room or shelter.
  - Remove any wet clothing.
  - Focus on the core of the body – chest, neck, head, and groin – first. Use an electric blanket or skin-to-skin contact under dry blankets.
  - Warm beverages may be helpful. Encourage them to drink slowly. NEVER try to give fluids if the person is unconscious.
  - Keep the person dry and wrapped in a warm blanket, including the head and neck.
  - Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- If they have lost consciousness and do not seem to have a pulse or be breathing – begin CPR and continue until the person responds or help arrives.
- **Recognize the signs of frostbite.** Frostbite most commonly occurs on the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes. It can occur rapidly and result in permanent damage.
  - Redness or pain in any skin area
  - Skin that feels unusually firm or "waxy"
  - White or grayish-yellow skin
  - Numbness
- Frostbite can be difficult to notice on your own body. If you notice any of the signs of frostbite:
  - Get to a warm room or shelter.
  - Avoid walking on frostbitten feet/toes or rubbing the affected area as this increases potential for serious damage.
  - Immerse the affected area in warm (NOT HOT) water. Water should be comfortable to the touch to unaffected areas.
  - Affected areas may be warmed using body heat - Avoid using heating pads, lamps, stoves, fires, radiators, etc. as the numbed areas can easily be burned.
  - Seek medical attention.
- Remove additional clothing items when you feel yourself getting too warm. Sweat increases heat loss.
- Avoid drinking caffeinated, alcoholic, or beverages that are overly sugary while working in the cold.
- Use extreme caution to avoid over exertion. Cold weather and extra layers add to the natural strain your body and heart experience. Work slowly and don't overdo it!
- Prepare for major weather events before they occur. While there will surely be things that go awry, proper preparation can help reduce the amount of time necessary outside during the worst weather.
- Remove snow accumulations when and where possible. Use a de-icing product or sand to improve traction.

Working in the bitter cold temperatures is unavoidable in some cases – REMEMBER livestock is replaceable, you are not!

Adapted from EXTREME COLD – US Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

These safety rules have been written and provided to you for your safety. Your signature below indicates you have read and understand these rules, and further, that you accept the responsibility of always using good judgment to make workplace safety your number one priority.

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