



Preventing Hypothermia and Frostbite

The Next Three Seconds Protects Your Life, Your Loved Ones, Your Livelihood®

The N3L3 philosophy:
our approach to protecting workers from fatal and life-changing events.

Eastern Alliance is here to help. To learn more about Eastern's N3L3 program and access other safety resources, sign in and visit the Safety Tools on www.easternalliance.com, or contact your Risk Management Consultant for assistance

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Hypothermia occurs when body temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Do you know how to recognize hypothermia and what to do?

Symptoms of hypothermia include fatigue, drowsiness, uncontrolled shivering, bluish skin, slurred speech, clumsy movements, irritability, and irrational or confused behavior. Here are some tips for what to do if a co-worker appears to be suffering from hypothermia:

- Call for emergency help, and move him or her to a warm, dry place.
- Remove wet clothing and replace with warm, dry clothing or wrap the person in blankets.
- Give the victim warm, sweet drinks if the person is alert.
- Avoid drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, or hot chocolate) or alcohol, because they hinder the body's heat-producing mechanisms and will cause the body's core to drop.
- Have the victim move arms and legs to create muscle heat. If they are unable to do this, place warm bottles or hot packs in the armpits, groin, neck and head areas.
- Finally, do not rub the victim's body or place them in a warm water bath. This could stop the heart.

Hypothermia is not the only danger of working in cold conditions. Frostbite occurs when deep layers of skin freeze. Symptoms include pale, waxy skin and numbness in the affected area. Frostbite usually affects fingers, hands, toes, feet, ears, and nose. If a co-worker seems to be suffering from frostbite:

- Move him or her to a warm, dry place.
- Do not rub the affected area. This might damage the skin. Instead, gently place the affected area in warm—not hot—water for 25 to 40 minutes.
- When normal feeling and color have returned, dry the skin, and wrap the affected area to keep it warm.
- Seek medical attention.

To prevent frostbite and hypothermia, remember these simple safety rules:

- Dress warmly in waterproof and wind-resistant clothing. Wear several layers to provide the best protection.
- Wear a hat and gloves. Remember, up to 40 percent of your body heat can be lost if your head is uncovered.
- Wear insulated, waterproof boots to protect against cold and dampness.
- Take frequent short breaks in a warm, dry place to allow your body to warm up.
- Drink warm, sweet beverages, but avoid caffeine or alcohol.
- Finally, eat warm, high-calorie foods on meal and snack breaks.