Safety Talk

Hypothermia and Hyperthermia Safety Talk



PRESENTED BY:

MEETING START TIME:

DATE OF MEETING:

MEETING END TIME:

Keep the Conversation Going with a Safety Talk Question:

What Can We Do to Prevent Hypothermia and Hyperthermia on the Job Site?

1. Extreme Temperatures: What to Know
   a. Cold Stress—Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Workers on job sites are especially vulnerable due to prolonged exposure.
   b. Heat Stress—Hyperthermia occurs when the body absorbs more heat than it can dissipate. Workers on job sites are especially vulnerable due to physical exertion and heat generated by equipment.

2. Preparing for Extreme Temperatures (Hot or Cold)
   a. Forecast—Monitor temperatures and air conditions (wind chill, humidity) before entering the job site and throughout the workday.
   b. Exposure—Schedule the most strenuous activities when temperatures are least extreme. Rotate workers and schedule breaks to warm up or cool down. Increase break frequency as temperatures become more extreme or workload becomes more demanding.
   c. Teamwork—Monitor yourself and your co-workers. Use the buddy system. You may recognize a warning sign in a co-worker before they do. Best practices for new employees or those returning to work after time away include gradual progression into the environment with close monitoring until they are fully acclimated.
   d. Response—Know how to respond to an incident. Emergency response should include calling for medical help and moving the worker to shelter.

3. Preparing for Cold: Best Practices to Prevent Hypothermia
   a. Prepare Your Body:
      i. Clothing—Retain body heat by wearing multiple layers of loose-fitting clothing with outer layers designed to protect against wind and moisture. Insulated and waterproof gloves, boots and hats are ideal. Moisture rapidly increases heat loss, so replace wet clothing as soon as possible.

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Sources:

1. https://www.osha.gov/winter-weather/hazards
2. https://www.osha.gov/winter-weather/cold-stress
3. https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/cold-stress/about/index.html
4. https://www.osha.gov/heat-exposure
5. https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2011-174/pdfs/2011-174.pdf
6. https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/risk-factors/heat-and-chronic-conditions.html

   ii. Nutrition—Exhaustion and dehydration significantly increase risk. Consume sufficient calories and get quality sleep to stay fueled and alert. Drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol. Drink warm, sweet beverages when necessary.

b. Recognize Symptoms—Early warning signs include a drop in body temperature (below 95 F), shivering, fatigue, loss of coordination and confusion or disorientation. Severe warning signs include the end of shivering, slurred speech, slow breathing and pulse, and loss of consciousness.

c. Emergency Care—After calling for help and moving the worker to shelter, remove wet clothing and replace it with dry clothing and blankets. Warm the core areas (chest, neck, head, groin). If the worker is conscious and alert, give them warm beverages.

4. Preparing for Heat: Best Practices to Prevent Hyperthermia

   a. Prepare Your Body:

      i. Clothing—Wear light, breathable clothing. Be aware that protective gear may trap heat and increase risk. To protect against direct sunlight, apply sunscreen and use wide-brimmed helmets.

      ii. Hydration—Drink water before entering the job site and regularly throughout the day, even before you feel thirsty (8 ounces every 20 minutes during moderate work).

   b. Equipment and Engineering—Use insulation, shielding and barriers during hot work. Remove unnecessary heat exposures and ensure proper ventilation, including using oscillating fans when possible.

   c. Recognize Symptoms—Early warning signs include thirst, heavy sweating, headache, dizziness, weakness and nausea. Severe warning signs include profuse sweating or hot skin, high body temperature, confusion, seizures and loss of consciousness.

   d. Emergency Care—After calling for help and moving the worker to shelter, remove unnecessary outer clothing. Cool the worker with water, wet towels, ice packs and increased air movement (fanning).

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Worker Comments / Feedback:

To be signed by all employees, contract workers, clients and others who participated in the safety talk prior to commencing work.

Signatures:

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