Cold Stress

In British Columbia, coldest temperatures usually occur in January and February. Whenever temperatures drop near to the freezing point and as wind speed increases, heat can leave your body rapidly, leading to cold stress and other serious health problems.

There are several types of cold stress: hypothermia, frostbite, trench foot, and chilblains.

**Hypothermia** happens when there has been prolonged exposure to cold and reduction in core body temperature. Low body temperature affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well. This makes hypothermia particularly dangerous.

**Frostbite** is a freezing injury causing a loss of feeling and color in the affected areas. It often affects the nose, ears, fingers, or toes. Frostbite can permanently damage body tissues and lead to amputation.

**Trench foot** is an injury of the feet resulting from prolonged exposure to wet and cold conditions. It can occur at temperatures as high as 60°F if the feet are constantly wet.

**Chilblains** are caused by the repeated exposure of skin to temperatures just above freezing to as high as 60°F. The cold exposure causes permanent damage to the capillary beds in the skin. Redness and itching occur and return with additional exposure.
To prevent cold stress, you should

- wear appropriate clothing
- protect the ears, face, hands, and feet
- move into warm locations during breaks and limit the amount of time outside on extremely cold days
- carry cold weather gear, such as extra socks, gloves, hats, jacket, blankets, clothes, and hot liquid
- include a thermometer and hot packs in your first aid kit
- avoid touching cold metal surfaces with bare skin
- monitor your physical condition and that of your coworkers.

Prevention Against Seasonal Influenza

Vaccination

Vaccination has been proven as an effective measure to prevent influenza and reduce the risk of implications from the flu. BCIT Medical Services provides seasonal flu vaccinations prior to the arrival of influenza season each year. Employees and students are encouraged to use their services.

Good Personal Hygiene & Healthy Diet

- Wash hands often and well. Hand washing should be done with soap for > 20 seconds.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing.
- Dispose of used tissues or other potentially infectious articles properly.
- Avoid sharing of eating and drinking utensils.
- Ensure sound sleep, balance diet, regular exercise and sufficient outdoor activities
- If sick, stay home and wear a mask in public places if necessary.

First Aid Report

To view the most recent first aid report

WHY A HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER?

Health and Safety is a priority at BCIT! Health and Safety newsletters contain monthly first aid statistics, compliance concerns, and updates of new legislation and interest articles.

The Newsletter will be created and circulated each month. Please visit the Safety and Security office at the North End of SW01 for printed copies of the newsletter.

To submit ideas or suggestions for future installments, please contact the Health and Safety Office.