WORKING OUTSIDE IN THE COLD
Tips to Deal With Frostbite, Hypothermia, Dehydration

Frostbite
Usually affects the fingers, hands, toes, feet, ears and nose

Superficial Frostbite
What to look for
• White, waxy, or grayish-yellow patches
• Skin is cold, numb and stiff
• Underlying tissue is pliable when depressed

How to treat
• Move the victim to a warm, dry area
• Loosen any constrictive clothing
• Place dry, sterile gauze between toes and fingers
• Slightly elevate the affected part
• Seek medical attention immediately

More than an hour from medical help?
• Place the frostbitten part in warm—not hot—water (102° to 106° F). Rewarm for 20 to 40 minutes (until tissues soften)

Deep Frostbite
What to look for
• Waxy, pale, solid skin
• Blister may appear

How to treat
• Move the victim indoors immediately
• Seek medical attention
• Never rub with your hands with snow, expose to open fire, or soak in cold water

Hypothermia
What to look for
• Change in mental status
• Uncontrollable shivering
• Cool abdomen and a low body temperature
• If severe, muscles may be rigid, skin dark and puffy, irregular heart and respiratory rates and/or unconsciousness

How to treat
• Move the victim out of the cold
• Place in a horizontal (flat) position
• Replace wet clothing with dry
• Cover the victim’s head
• Call for immediate medical attention
• Use blankets, pillows, towels or newspapers to insulate the victim
• Provide a warm, sweet drink— avoid caffeine or alcohol
• Give artificial respiration or CPR (if you are trained) as needed

Dehydration
What to look for
• Weakness, dizziness, fatigue and dry mouth
• Provide a warm, sweet drink— avoid caffeine or alcohol
• If severe, seek medical attention

Safety precautions*
• Dress in layers
• Wear synthetic fabrics close to the skin
• Wear waterproof or water-repellent clothing
• Brush off snow regularly to stay dry
• Drink warm, sweet liquids— avoid caffeine or alcohol
• Eat warm, solid foods
• Work in “buddy pairs” to ensure each other’s safety
• Go in at regular intervals to rest and warm up

*Use extreme caution if you suffer from a health condition, are taking medication or are in poor physical condition. You may be at increased risk.

In 2014, 930 persons in the United States died after being exposed to excessive natural cold while on the job.*

* Source: National Safety Council, Injury Facts 2017®