



Frost Bite Incident

CAGC SAFETY ALERT

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Canadian Association of Geophysical Contractors

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Safety Alert

02-07

Incident Date

January 11, 2007

Incident Location

Bonnyville, Alberta

Description of the Incident

An experienced worker was laying out cables on a seismic line near Bonnyville, Alberta; the temperature ranged from -25 to -30 degrees Celsius. The crew was operating under a "frostbite warning alert" and all crew members, including the involved worker, were orientated on the hazard potential. The company made warm-up breaks available to all workers throughout the work day. Workers were given the opportunity to put their names on a supply list for winter gear of any kind. The affected worker did not request any additional winter gear.

The affected worker had warm up breaks during the day and had only felt a little cold in his toes. The affected worker was wearing insulated hiking boots, which he had used in seismic work the previous winter. The worker finished the work day without incident, but when he returned to his hotel and took his boots off, he noticed some discolouration on his big, right toe. A subsequent medical examination at the hospital revealed extensive frost bite on many of his toes. The worker then was admitted to hospital and spent the next three weeks in recovery. He is still undergoing therapy for the injury but at this point will most likely avoid any surgical interventions.

Recommendations and Outcomes

- During cold weather operations all workers must utilize the proper PPE, including footwear;
- All workers who feel they do not have the proper footwear must exercise their right to refuse unsafe work until they have procured appropriate footwear;
- When warm up breaks are given, workers must have a dry pair of socks to change into;
- All workers are to monitor their fellow workers using the buddy system and watch for signs of frost bite;
- Crew management must monitor weather conditions at all times and adjust work schedules as required.

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