



Cold Weather Hazards – Courtesy of Devon Canada

CAGC INFORMATION ALERT

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Information

Alert

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Due to recent cold weather related incidents experienced by a Devon operated rig; highlights the need for increased care during cold weather. Although most people are well aware of the hazards, it is worth reinforcing with both field and office workers, the preventative measures, signs, symptoms and treatment.

The best defense against cold weather related hazards is prevention by wearing and managing protective clothing. Layers of clothing are recommended so that they can be added or removed dependent on the temperature and the demands of the task at hand. Contingencies should also be considered in the event that the clothing becomes wet and needs to be changed or dried. Workers and supervisors should regularly monitor each other for the onset of signs and symptoms of cold weather hazards.

Remember that wind amplifies the effects of cold temperature.

The two main concerns are:

- **Frostbite:** is the actual freezing of a body part as a result of lengthy exposure to temperatures below freezing. It is common on the face, hands and feet. Its onset may be signaled by a tingling sensation in the affected area and the appearance of tell tale waxy white spots. The hands, and feet present a more difficult problem in that they are usually covered and cannot be readily seen by you or your co-workers. In the cold, if your face, hands or feet have been feeling the effects of the cold, then stop hurting, investigate as you may have frostbite. Early detection will minimize the amount of tissue damage.

Field treatment for frostbite includes:

- a) Preventing further heat loss,
 - b) Re-warming gradually,
 - c) Do not rub, and
 - d) For deep frostbite treat the limb gently - do not thaw, and obtain medical help.
- **Hypothermia:** is subtle in that the person does not usually recognize that he is becoming hypothermic. It is caused by the loss of heat from the body's vital inner core. This condition results when the loss of body heat is greater than body heat production. The body loses heat in a number of ways and seemingly insignificant heat losses can add up rapidly. Considerable heat loss occurs through the head, hands and feet. The symptoms include: lethargy, inability to concentrate, fatigue, shivering and uncoordinated actions.

Field treatment for hypothermia includes:

- a) Reducing heat loss,
- b) Replacing wet clothing,
- c) Drinking warm non-alcoholic liquids,
- d) Seeking shelter, and
- e) Obtaining medical attention.

Remember to protect yourself and look out for your co-workers. Always plan your travel, carry extra layers of clothing and be prepared for emergencies.