



TDCJ Risk Management's Training Circular

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NOVEMBER COOLER TIMES



Some of us living in **TEXAS** look forward to the cooler weather rolling around. The joy of wearing those colorful sweaters and warm jackets we only get to wear for a very short time. Sitting by a nice fireplace drinking hot chocolate with little marshmallows floating around in the cup or just curling up on the sofa with a warm blanket and a good book. While sitting there in comfort you realize the holidays are around the corner, along with the hustle and bustle that goes along with it. Looking out of the window at the fallen leaves, and the cooler air, a smile comes across your face as you are sliding back down on the sofa under that warm blanket thinking **WINTER** is here. And with winter being here so are some



concerns about the cold weather exposures.

Do you know the 5 P's of Cold Weather Preparedness?

- P** - Protect **P**eople
- P** - Proect **P**lants
- P** - Protect **P**ets
- P** - Protect exposed **P**iping
- P** - **P**ractice fire safety

When winter temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can become a challenge. Extremely cold temperatures often accompany a winter storm, so you may have to cope with power failures and icy roads. Although staying indoors as much as possible can help reduce the risk of car crashes and falls on the ice, you may also face indoor hazards. Many homes will be too cold - either due to a power failure or because the heating system isn't adequate for the weather. When people must use space heaters and fire-

places to stay warm, the risk of household fires increases, as well as the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Exposure to cold temperatures, whether indoors or outside, can cause serious or life-threatening health problems. Infants and the elderly are particularly at risk, but anyone can be affected. To keep yourself and your family safe, you should know how to prevent cold-related health problems and what to do if a cold-weather health emergency arises.

Hypothermia and frostbite are two of the serious consequences of working outdoors in the winter months. TDCJ has a lot of positions that require employees and offenders to be outdoor regardless of the temperature or any other weather condition. We



can't stop winter, we need to protect ourselves from the cold by being familiar and prepared. Each year Administrative Directive AD - 10.64

(Temperature Extremes in the TDCJ Workplace) cold weather training is provided to unit staff and offenders by Health Services with the assistance of Risk Management. Unit Wardens use the wind - chill index located in AD - 10.64, local weather/news stations, or the instruments located on the unit to determine the safety of cold weather working conditions.



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Understanding Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a dangerous lowering of the body's temperature by exposure to cold or wet conditions. The air temperature doesn't have to be particularly low to cause hypothermia - just being wet and chilled can do the same thing. Low body temperature can affect the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly, therefore a person may not know what is happening and won't be able to do anything about it.

Hypothermia Symptoms

- ⇒ Chills, shivering and exhaustion
- ⇒ Inability to think straight or speak coherently



- ⇒ Fumbling hands
- ⇒ Irrational behavior
- ⇒ Poor coordination
- ⇒ Loss of consciousness

Victims of hypothermia are often:

- ⇒ Elderly people with inadequate food, clothing, or heating
- ⇒ Babies sleeping in cold bedrooms
- ⇒ People who remain outside for long periods
- ⇒ People who drink alcohol and use illicit drugs

Hypothermia Prevention

- ⇒ Dress warmly. Wear a hat, waterproof boots and gloves.
- ⇒ Dress in layers so you can add or remove clothing as the temperature changes.
- ⇒ Keep your clothes dry. Put on your waterproof gear before you get wet. Carry a extra set of dry clothes.
- ⇒ Eat regular meals with enough carbohydrates and fats so that your body can keep producing heat.
- ⇒ Stay away from alcoholic beverages.



- ⇒ Stay active in cold weather and take rest periods in a warm dry place.
- ⇒ If you start developing signs of hypothermia, get to a shelter promptly and seek medical attention as soon as possible.



Understanding Frostbite

Frostbite is another cold - weather danger. It is an injury which occurs when the body tissue freezes. The fingers, toes, face and ears are the most likely to be damaged. Frostbite makes the skin numb, giving it a white and waxy appearance. If the skin becomes frostbitten, it is better to have it thawed at a hospital by professionals. But if you can not get to medical help, warm the frostbitten area gradually with body heat, tepid water, or blankets. **DO NOT** use hot water or direct heat. **DO NOT** rub the affected area with your hands because you will do or cause more damage.

Frostbite Prevention

- ⇒ Keep all of your extremities covered. Cover your cheeks in cold or windy conditions.
- ⇒ Carry spare gloves, mittens, liners and



socks in case yours gets wet.

- ⇒ Make sure that the gloves and footwear do not fit so tight that they can cut off circulation.



- ⇒ Check yourself for frost-bite by making sure you can move your fingers and toes and that you still have feeling in your face.



Staff and Offender Care

Staff and offenders who work outside and will be exposed to cold weather conditions for extended periods such as; agriculture, and outside industrial areas should dress with the necessary clothing to help prevent cold weather exposure. Here are the types of clothing that would be appropriate:

- ⇒ Thermal underwear
- ⇒ Insulated jackets
- ⇒ Cotton gloves
- ⇒ Insulated hoods
- ⇒ Leather gloves
- ⇒ Heavy work shoes
- ⇒ Socks.



Care shall be taken to prevent perspiration which could soak clothes and compromise the clothing's insulating valve.

Remember layers of clothing shall be removed or added according to the temperature and physical activity.

WINTER

W - stands for **weather** conditions. Listen to weather forecast so you will know the wind chill factor and temperature for the day. Be prepared.

I - is for staying **indoor**, don't go outside in very cold weather unless you absolutely have to.



N - stands for checking on your **neighbors** and co-workers.

T - stands for **temperature**. Set you thermostat between 70° 9day-time) and 60° (nighttime). When outside ensure your wear the appropriate clothing.



E - is for **eating**. Stock up for winter so you wouldn't have to be out in bad weather or when roads may be hazardous.



R - stands for **repairs**. Ensure whatever you use to heat your home is in safe working condition.



To the millions of veterans who love their country, who have shown through patriotism and willingness to serve and sacrifice for this county we honor you on a special day - November 11. To all the veterans we would like to say:



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