TOOLBOX TALKS » COLD STRESS » WORK/REST PROCEDURES



**EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANTS:** 

# **TOPIC: COLD TEMPERATURE WORK/REST PROCEDURES**

Weather is one thing you can't control – but you can control shift schedules. Often overlooked, it's an easy way to mitigate the side effects of working in a cold environment.

## // SMARTER SCHEDULING, FEWER INJURIES

- » Reducing exposure time to cold temps is key
- » Create work/break schedule based on that day's ambient air temp and wind speed
- » Think like a hockey coach: schedule shorter shifts to keep your team productive and less injury-prone
- » Pace yourself; don't over-exert
- » Working in the middle of the day, when possible, allows you to take advantage of the solar heat load that accumulates on sunny days

### // ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- » Windchill = ambient air temps + wind speed
- » Windchill and damp air accelerates heat loss from body
- » Contact with cold surfaces also accelerates heat loss i.e. bare hands on cold tools + machinery

## // DEHYDRATION IN THE DEEP FREEZE

- » Dehydration is as common in winter months as it is summer months
- » A dehydrated body is more susceptible to common colds and flu
- » Drink warm, non-caffeinated liquids

#### // MORE TIPS FOR COLD WEATHER WORK SAFETY

- » Find an enclosed space with heaters and windbreaks to take breaks
- » Educate yourself about cold-related illness and injuries
- » Wear insulated and waterproof footwear on the job
- » Keep a dry change of clothing with you

Being responsible about working in cold conditions doesn't begin and end with supervisors. Workers should abide by the buddy system, educate themselves on cold-related illnesses and keep an eye out to see if their fellow crew members are exhibiting any cold stress symptoms.

Toolbox Talks are intended to facilitate worksite health and safety conversations. For more Toolbox Talks, please visit <u>www.ergodyne.com/blog</u>