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1. **Cold Stress Can Happen Above Freezing** – Many workers think cold stress only happens in extreme cold, but **temperatures as high as 50°F**, combined with wind, wet clothing, or exhaustion, can still lead to hypothermia.
2. **Wind Chill Makes It Worse** – The **wind chill factor** can make temperatures feel much colder than they are. A 20°F temperature with a 20-mph wind can feel like **5°F**, increasing the risk of frostbite and hypothermia. (See our short video on this topic below).
3. **Wet Clothing Drastically Increases Heat Loss** – Water conducts heat away from the body **25 times faster than dry air**, so wet clothing—whether from sweat, rain, or snow—can rapidly lead to cold stress. **Stay dry to stay warm.**
4. **Frostbite Can Happen in Minutes** – In extreme cold, **exposed skin can develop frostbite in as little as 10-15 minutes**. Workers should wear insulated gloves, hats, and face coverings when working in freezing temperatures.
5. **Hypothermia Doesn't Always Look Obvious** – A worker with hypothermia might just seem **confused, clumsy, or unusually tired**. If someone **stumbles, slurs their speech, or appears disoriented**, they need to be warmed up immediately.
6. **Layering Clothing is Key** – The best way to stay warm is by wearing **three layers**: a moisture-wicking base layer, an insulating middle layer (like wool or fleece), and a waterproof outer layer to block wind and moisture.
7. **Dehydration is Still a Risk in Cold Weather** – Workers lose fluids through sweat and breathing, even in the cold. **Drinking warm fluids** like soup or tea, along with plenty of water, helps maintain hydration and circulation.

8. **Breaks in Warm Areas Are Essential** – Workers should take **frequent breaks in a heated shelter** to prevent prolonged exposure. Short, regular warm-up periods are better than working continuously in the cold.
9. **Alcohol and Caffeine Can Increase Cold Stress Risk** – Alcohol gives a false sense of warmth by drawing heat away from vital organs. Caffeine can reduce circulation. **Water, warm decaffeinated tea, or electrolyte drinks** are the best options.
10. **Cold-Related Illnesses Can Happen Indoors Too** – Unheated buildings, poorly insulated work areas, and **cold storage facilities** can put indoor workers at risk. Proper PPE and warm break areas are just as important inside as they are outside.
11. **Older Workers Are at Higher Risk** – Workers over **50** may have a harder time regulating body temperature and noticing early signs of cold stress. They should take extra precautions and warm up more frequently.
12. **Numb Fingers and Toes Mean It's Time to Warm Up** – If a worker loses feeling in their fingers, toes, or ears, that's an early sign of frostbite. **Immediate rewarming** in a warm area can prevent permanent damage.

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