

# 2008 Monthly ES&H Campaign: January

## Identifying and Mitigating Winter Safety Hazards on Jobsites

**Monday, 28th**



Winter has arrived and jobsite conditions may have changed. To maintain safety, adjustments may be needed. What was once dry could now be wet, icy, or snow covered. Planning for changing conditions during winter is very important and helps to identify and mitigate jobsite hazards.

### **Brrr, It's Cold Out There!**

Preparation and planning are essential to ensure personal safety in cold weather. The following is a list of precautions that have to be taken in order to ensure safety when exposed to cold weather:

- Safe work planning – Take the time to understand the weather conditions and forecast
- Dress in multiple layers and keep your clothes dry – A cold environment takes away body heat
- Do some stretching exercises to warm up prior to starting your work activity
- Carry a snow shovel, de-icing material and sand in your vehicle
- Know how to identify, treat and prevent cold stress
- Wear footwear that provides good traction in snow and ice
- Shorten your stride and widen your stance on slippery surfaces (“penguin walk”)
- Always utilize handrails while using stairs to access platforms
- Cold air is dry and can cause dry skin and loss of body fluid- drink plenty of water to stay hydrated
- Have a change of clothing in case you get wet

### **Jobsite Hazards**

Working on job sites during the winter season could be dangerous if the right measures are not taken. Here are some tips on how to avoid incidents while performing a job during the winter season:

- Cell site access roads need to be maintained during winter
- Cover or barricade openings – snow can mask or hide hazards
- Watch for falling ice from towers and snow from roofs
- Clean snow from the work area and spread de-icing materials
- Rooftop sites contain numerous hazards caused by ice and snow – identify them prior to starting work
- If excavating in frozen ground, plan ahead and cover the ground with insulated blankets a few days prior to digging to help thaw out the soil
- Shield work areas from the wind and snow
- Special care is needed while using ladders, working on elevated platforms or towers in snow and icy conditions

### **How Cold is Cold?**

Air temperature is not the only measure of cold-, wind makes it feel even colder. Brisk winds and low temperatures combine to increase the danger. Exposed human flesh freezes within one minute at -20° F when wind speed is 5 miles per hour (mph). When the wind speed increases to 20 mph, human flesh will freeze at 10° F. When skin becomes wet, the effects of cold temperatures are further amplified. Keeping dry is a must in winter weather.

It takes extra effort to ensure safety in harsh winter weather. By taking the time to understand the weather forecast, and planning accordingly, you can minimize the hazards these conditions often present.

**Visit the Communications ES&H website for more information.**