

# Mandatory Stand-up talk

*January 3, 2014*

## Dressing for Cold Weather – Think Warm

*All Employees*

With cold temperatures and snow arriving throughout many parts of the country, dressing properly is an important solution to keeping our Postal employees safe this winter. Dressing for cold weather is not difficult, but careful planning helps.

Some important things to consider:

### **Layering**

Choose your clothing carefully. Layering is the best way to keep warm. Add a first layer consisting of a light fabric that will wick sweat away from your body. Avoid pure cotton, linen, or other similar materials, because these fabrics retain moisture and can cause you to become colder. In addition, layer a knit sweater or sweatshirt over the top of the first layer. Finally, add your coat or jacket as the top layer. Not only will the multiple layers keep you warm, but if temperatures increase, you can easily remove a layer to remain comfortable.

### **Protect Face and Extremities**

Your face and extremities, such as your hands and feet are the most vulnerable when exposed to cold and windy temperatures. It is important to protect your face and extremities from the cold and wind. Wrap a scarf around your neck and pull it over your mouth and nose to guard against the cold air. Additionally, wearing a winter hat can protect your ears and head before going outside, and lastly, keep your hands warm with gloves or mittens.

### **Stay Dry**

When planning how to dress for cold weather, staying dry should be a top priority. It is usually a good idea to get a coat that has a waterproof or water-resistant outside layer, especially if you will be exposed to rain, sleet, hail or snow. Additionally, waterproof or water-resistant shoes or boots will help keep your feet dry on wet days. If your clothes get wet, it is important that you remove and replace them to avoid frostbite.

So remember...Dress appropriately for the weather, and as always, if you feel that you are experiencing weather-related issues, notify your supervisor immediately.

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## Protecting Yourself from Cold Stress

*All Employees*

Exposure to cold environments increases the chances of experiencing serious physical symptoms, therefore it's important to provide proper training and awareness to employees in order to prevent injury or illness. The following are the different types of cold stress illnesses/injuries, including their symptoms and first aid treatments:

### **Hypothermia**

Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can be produced, which then decreases body temperature to dangerous levels.

<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>First Aid</b>
<i>Early Symptoms</i>  <i>Shivering</i> <i>Fatigue</i> <i>Confusion</i> <i>Loss of consciousness</i>  <i>Late Symptoms</i>  <i>Blue Skin</i> <i>Dilated Pupils</i> <i>Slow Pulse</i> <i>Loss of consciousness</i>	<i>Call 911</i> <i>Notify Supervision</i> <i>Move to a warm area</i> <i>Increase body temperature by warming the body</i> <i>If unconscious, perform Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)</i>

### **Frostbite**

Frostbite is an injury to the body caused by freezing, which can cause loss of feeling, change in skin color, skin damage and in severe cases, amputation of the affected area.

<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>First Aid</b>
<i>Reduced blood flow to hands and feet</i> <i>Numbness</i> <i>Tingling</i> <i>Blue, pale and/or waxy skin</i>	<i>Move to a warm area</i> <i>Increase body temperature by warming the body</i> <i>Use warm, not hot methods to warm areas</i> <i>Get medical attention for affected areas</i>

## Trench Foot

Trench foot is an injury to the feet, caused by prolonged exposure to wet and cold conditions.

<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>First Aid</b>
<i>Reddening of the skin Numbness Tingling Leg cramps Blisters Bleeding under the skin Gangrene</i>	<i>Remove wet clothing Dry the affected area Avoid walking on feet to limit tissue damage</i>

## Chilblains

Chilblains are a tissue injury that is caused by repeated exposure to cool, humid temperatures.

<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>First Aid</b>
<i>Reddening of the skin Blistering Itching Inflammation Ulceration in severe cases</i>	<i>Avoid scratching Slowly warm the skin Keep the area clean and covered Use corticosteroid creams to relieve itching and swelling</i>

USPS employees can face many environmental hazards while performing their daily duties, including cold stress. Cold stress has the ability to cause illness, injury or become life threatening. That's why it's important that postal employees know the dangers and receive the proper training prior to performing any work activities. Therefore, the following steps should be followed in order to protect our employees from the dangers of cold stress:

1. Wear proper attire for the weather conditions (ex. layers, water-resistant)
2. Protect your face and extremities
3. Stay dry
4. Take short breaks in warm areas on cold days
5. Monitor physical condition