



January 19, 2018

Mr. Brian J. Wagner
President
National Association of Postal Supervisors
1727 King Street, Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314-2753

Dear Brian:

As a matter of general interest, the Postal Service has created several Stand-Up Talks concerning employees working in cold weather environments.

We have enclosed the following Stand-Up Talks:

- *Protecting Yourself from Cold Stress*
- *Black Ice*
- *Dealing with Snow*
- *Dressing for Cold Weather – Think Warm*
- *Frostbite*
- *Winter Walking Safety*
- *Winter Weather Conditions*

Please contact Bruce Nicholson at extension 7773 if you have any questions concerning this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan S. Moore".

Alan S. Moore
Manager
Labor Relations Policies and Programs

Enclosures

Mandatory Stand-up talk

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.

| Symptoms | First Aid |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Early Symptoms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shivering • Fatigue • Confusion • Loss of consciousness <p><i>Late Symptoms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Skin • Dilated Pupils • Slow Pulse • Loss of consciousness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 911 • Notify Supervision • Move to a warm area • Increase body temperature by warming the body • If unconscious, perform Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) |

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.

| Symptoms | First Aid |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced blood flow to hands and feet • Numbness • Tingling • Blue, pale and/or waxy skin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to a warm area • Increase body temperature by warming the body • Use warm, not hot methods to warm areas • Get medical attention for affected areas |

Trench Foot

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

| Symptoms | First Aid |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reddening of the skin</i> • <i>Numbness</i> • <i>Tingling</i> • <i>Leg cramps</i> • <i>Blisters</i> • <i>Bleeding under the skin</i> • <i>Gangrene</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Remove wet clothing</i> • <i>Dry the affected area</i> • <i>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.

| Symptoms | First Aid |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reddening of the skin</i> • <i>Blistering</i> • <i>Itching</i> • <i>Inflammation</i> • <i>Ulceration in severe cases</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Avoid scratching</i> • <i>Slowly warm the skin</i> • <i>Keep the area clean and covered</i> • <i>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 scheduled breaks in warm areas on cold days whenever possible
5. Monitor physical condition



Let's Talk Safety

Black Ice

You can be driving along a bare highway and the next thing you know you've done a 360-degree spin and you're upside down in a ditch. That's what can happen when you encounter black ice, an extremely dangerous driving condition. Black ice develops on road surfaces when temperatures are near the freezing mark. Snow melts and freezes again, or rain falls and freezes on the pavement. Frost can also create unexpected icy conditions.

Black ice is so dangerous because it is almost invisible. The road surface looks bare and dry, and the driver feels safe driving at normal speeds.

These are some road conditions which might suggest black ice:

- Temperatures just above or below freezing
- A dark or dull appearance to the pavement
- Sections of the road which are shaded by trees or other obstructions like the downward side of an east-west hill. (This would include areas the morning sunlight has not yet reached
- Bridges, overpasses and underpasses)
- Damp areas where the road follows a lakeshore or riverbank
- Places where you have encountered black ice in the past

Heed the radio and TV road reports and try to avoid traveling on black ice. If you do suspect this road condition, drive slowly and use extreme caution. Avoid braking, accelerating, passing, or turning sharply. Get off the road as soon as you can do so safely if you other drivers are not able to drive in control.

Here are a few other winter driving safety tips:

- In winter conditions, allow yourself extra time to stop and turn. Slow down well in advance of traffic lights.
- Leave extra space between your vehicle and other traffic.
- If you have to stop because of unsafe conditions, pull off the road, well away from traffic lanes.
- Rehearse winter driving in an empty parking lot. Make your vehicle slide and skid, and practice correcting these maneuvers. Learn to stop and turn without losing control on snow and ice.

"SAFETY IS A CORE VALUE"



Let's Talk Safety

Dealing with Snow

- Snow banks are blind spots!! You cannot see vehicles coming out of driveways and intersections!! They cannot see you either!!
- Be prepared to sound your horn and apply brakes.
- Advise your drivers to use caution, reduce speed, keep a safe distance between vehicles, and watch out for the other drivers.
- Keep windshield washer fluid level full.
- Keep vehicle gas tanks full.
- Re-check snow removal equipment. Be sure to keep hands/feet out of snow blowers even when they become clogged with packed snow. Shut the unit off and use a stick of some type to clear it out.
- Keep parking lots, walks, steps, and ramps clear of snow and ice.
- Carriers and those responsible for snow removal should dress appropriately to include footwear.

"SAFETY IS A CORE VALUE"



Let's Talk Safety

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.

"SAFETY IS A CORE VALUE"



Let's Talk Safety

Frostbite

Frostbite, an injury to superficial tissues caused by freezing, is probably the most common injury resulting from exposure to cold elements. Cold, humidity, and high winds are the main factors involved in frostbite, but many other things contribute to its development, such as contact with wetness or metal, inadequate clothing, age, and one's general health condition.

Understanding Frostbite:

- The temperature, amount of moisture, length of exposure, and the person's physical condition determine the severity of the injury.
- Small areas such as the nose, cheeks, ears, and extremities are most vulnerable.
- As with burns, frostbite is classified by degrees. First degree, the least severe, is freezing without blistering or peeling. Second degree is freezing with blistering and peeling. Third degree, the most severe, is freezing with death of skin and possibly deeper tissues.
- In mild cases of frostbite, the symptoms are generally numbness, prickling, and itching of the affected part. As frostbite develops, the symptoms become more intense.
- Initially the frozen flesh will be hard and white, but later will become red or mottled. Pain may be felt initially, but it will subside. Often there is no pain. Blisters may form and the affected part is intensely cold and numb.

Treating Frostbite:

1. Drink Warm Fluids
2. Rewarm the frozen part rapidly by immersing it in warm, not hot, water. If water is not available or practical to use, wrap the affected part gently in a sheet and warm blankets.
3. Discontinue warming when the affected part becomes flushed. Thawing will cause tenderness, burning pain, and swelling.
4. Remove all restrictive clothing, elevate the affected part, and seek medical assistance.
5. Don't rub the affected part.
6. Don't apply a heat lamp or hot water bottle.
7. Don't break the blisters.
8. Don't rub the affected part with snow or ice water.
9. Don't walk on frostbitten feet after thawing.
10. Limit your exposure time in extremely cold conditions.

"SAFETY IS A CORE VALUE"



Let's Talk Safety

WINTER WALKING SAFETY

Winter, and the snow and ice it brings, can be dangerous. No matter how well the snow and ice is removed from parking lots or sidewalks, falls due to ice and snow still cause injuries. Here are some suggestions for walking safely in inclement weather.

Proper footwear is essential for safe walking on slippery surfaces

- Always wear slip-resistant shoes or ice grippers
- Never wear shoes with smooth soles or worn tread
- Keep your soles clean

Walk with care

- Pay attention to your surroundings and the surface you're walking on. Scan the area ahead of you to avoid snowy areas that may conceal painted surfaces covered with snow or black ice. Assume that all wet, dark areas on pavements are slippery and icy and approach with caution.
- Take short steps, sliding your feet. Walk with feet pointed outward (like a duck). Keep your weight forward and toes pointed outward to help maintain your balance. Make wide turns.
- Walk slow and deliberately.
- Only finger mail when it's safe to do so and conditions permit.
- Always stay on sidewalks. Avoid snow covered shortcuts across lawns that may conceal hazards.
- Take extra precautions when entering and exiting your vehicle.

Use care on stairs

- Where possible, use handrails or other stable supports especially when going up and down steps.
- Avoid steps that have not been cleared. When you encounter steps that are not properly cleared, notify your supervisor.

Be Seen

- Wear visible clothing especially at night or during heavy snow.
- Wait for vehicles to stop completely before crossing the road.
- Approaching vehicles may not be able to stop immediately due to road conditions.

If you lose your footing, try to relax

- Tensing your body increases the likeliness of injury.
- If you have a satchel or other soft object, try to use it to cushion your fall.

Remembering the dangers of winter walking, the importance of proper footwear, and the ability to fall correctly will help you stay on your feet.

Always Remember - Safety Depends on Me!

"SAFETY IS A CORE VALUE"



Let's Talk Safety

Winter Weather Conditions

Staying safe during and after a winter storm requires your full attention. Here are a few suggestions to assist you in the hazard recognition process.

When Driving:

- Ensure all windows and mirrors are free of snow. Make sure your vehicle has enough washer fluid.
- Reduce speed and increase the following distance between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Scan the road ahead. There will be decreased visibility due to the high snow banks. Other drivers will be forced to pull their vehicles out further into the line of traffic to see. Be prepared to act by reducing your speed and covering the brake with your foot.

When Walking:

- Scan your path of travel for ice and other tripping hazards.
- Do not attempt to use walks & stairs that have not been cleared. Use the handrails!
- Wear appropriate footwear.

"SAFETY IS A CORE VALUE"