

MAFES Dawg Tracks



January 22, 2007

Safety Tips: Cold Weather Protection



In the last few years, we have seen the weather patterns change considerably. Rarely do we have the extended days of snow and ice that result in school and factory closings as we have had in the past. But even with the changing patterns, there are precautions that we need to practice to remain healthy and safe during the few months that we do experience some periods of cold weather.

We all think that we practice all the right tips to remain healthy and safe during period of inclement weather. I believe that a reminder of these tips will assist you in preparing and drive home the points of needed protection.

Eat and Drink Wisely:

- Eating well-balanced meals will help to keep you warmer.
- Refrain from using alcohol and caffeinated beverages, as they tend to cause a loss in body heat.
- Drink warm, sweet beverages or broth, which help to maintain body heat. If one has some dietary restrictions, consult your doctor for proper directions.

Outdoor Safety- Dress Warm & Stay Dry:

- Always wear a hat. It has been said that wearing a hat keeps the body temperature 10 degrees higher.
- In extremely cold situations, one should wear a scarf or a facemask to protect the mouth and face.
- Sleeves that will fit tight around the wrists.
- Always wear gloves. Mittens tend to be warmer than gloves, but in most areas of work they can be a hindrance.
- When inclement wear is present, wear water-resistant coats and boots.
- Wearing several layers of loose-fitting clothing helps to maintain body temperature.

Avoid Exertion:

- Cold weather puts added strain on the heart. If you have heart disease or high-blood pressure, consult your doctor before doing any strenuous manual labor.
- Assuming that health conditions are satisfactory for cold weather work, you should dress warmly and work slowly and steadily. Don't exert yourself.

Understand Wind Chill:

- Wind chill index is the temperature your body feels when air temperature combines with wind speed. It is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by the effects of wind and air speed.
- When wind increases, it takes heat away from the body much quicker, thus reducing body temperature.

Avoid Ice:

Although we don't experience ice that often in Mississippi, it does happen occasionally. We've all experienced the dangers of walking on ice. Many injuries result from falls on ice-covered sidewalks, porches, steps, and driveways.

Keep a bag of salt or other chemicals for salt reduction handy for use after an ice storm. Sand is another medium that can be put on icy surfaces to reduce the chance of slippage.

Be Cautious About Travel:

Although not directly related to agriculture, it could be related if employees are injured and can't readily return to work.

- Listen for radio and television for weather reports and travel advisories by the National Weather Service.
- Avoid traveling in low visibility conditions.
- Avoid ice-covered roads, overpasses, and bridges when possible.
- If you must travel by necessity, take a set of tire chains and a mobile radio or cell phone with you.
- If the travel is necessary, always leave an itinerary of travel plans with someone so that they will know your destination and approximate time of arrival. Obviously, with this information available to someone other than yourself, if you should be late for your destination, it would be easier to locate you.
- Keep an emergency prepared packet of supplies in the vehicle, especially during these months of bad weather.
- Clean the windshield with a brush and the defroster. Refrain from using hot or even warm water to clear the ice, as it is always a good possibility of shattering the windshield.
- Don't rely on the car heat only for sufficient heat. The car could break down.
- Always carry additional warm clothing that is appropriate for the cold winter conditions.

What if I get Stranded?

- Tie a bright colored cloth to the antenna and raise the car hood.
- Move any needed supplies from the trunk to the interior of the vehicle.
- Wrap your body in all the available clothing and blankets that you have. Move your body and arms while waiting for help.
- Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour and keep the window cracked about an inch during this time. Be sure that snow isn't blocking the exhaust pipe; otherwise you might suffer from carbon dioxide poisoning.
- Huddle with other people for warmth. Don't eat the snow, it will lower body temperatures.

**THE CHANCE TAKER IS THE ACCIDENT
MAKER!!**

**ACCIDENTS HURT—SAFETY
DOESN'T!!**

Ted Gordon—Risk Mgmt./Loss Control Mgr.
MAFES-MSU-ES

662-566-2201

1/3/07

Excerpts:www.bt.cdc.gov