**Toolbox Talk Winter Work**



As we prepare for the holiday season, that means a change in the weather is upon us. When the temperature falls below freezing, conditions become strenuous for those of us who work outside, making safety training more important than ever. At HCCA, we recognize the importance of safety training and would like to share the reminders about dressing for and working in cold weather conditions.

**Frostbite and Hypothermia**

Frostbite refers to frozen tissue in the body as a result of exposure to cold. It is likely to occur in extremities (hands, feet, ears, nose) and places where skin is exposed. The best prevention for frostbite is to ensure that all areas of your skin are covered. Avoid working in wet clothing. Also avoid constrictive clothing, as restricted blood flow and poor circulation contribute to frostbite.

Exposed skin can start to freeze at just 28 degrees Fahrenheit. Deep frostbite can cause blood clotting and even gangrene.

Hypothermia is a potentially fatal condition caused by loss of body temperature. Symptoms include fatigue, nausea, confusion, light-headedness and profuse sweating. Hypothermia is prevented by staying warm and keeping dry.

**Wear the Right Gloves**

Gloves should have enough insulation to keep you warm and prevent frostbite, but be thin enough so that you can feel what you are doing if you are manipulating controls or tools.

Gloves which are too thick can also make your hands and wrists work too hard to hold objects, potentially causing strain or repetitive motion injury.

**Wear the Right Clothes**

Layers of light-weight clothing keep you warmer than a single layer of heavy clothes.

Do not work in wet clothing. Wet clothing is 20 times less warm than dry clothing.

Wear a hat. As much as half your body heat can escape from the top of your head.

Protect your ears: wear a hat that covers them, or use earmuffs.

Check your winter wardrobe for entanglement hazards, such as scarves, loose sleeves and drawstrings--anything that could get caught in machinery.

**Keep an Eye on Eye Wear**

Keep your safety eye wear from fogging up in the cold. Use anti-fog coatings and wipes that are appropriate for your eye wear.

**Prevent Slip & Falls**

Look at the soles of your winter footwear. Do they have adequate tread to prevent slips and falls on wet or icy surfaces?Walk slowly and carefully on icy or slippery surfaces. Be especially careful on ladders, platforms and stairways.

**Rest**

Get plenty of rest. Working in the cold, even traveling to and from work in the winter, can be unusually draining. Rest up so you can be alert and responsive.