

WHITE PAPER

COLD HARD FACTS:

Expert Guidance from Dr. Scott Cherry



Introduction

Winter is more than cozy sweaters and holiday cheer—it brings challenges for outdoor workers. From frostbite to dehydration, staying safe in wintry weather requires more than just bundling up. In this guide, informed by insights from Dr. Scott Cherry, Axiom Medical’s Chief Medical Officer, we will provide practical strategies to protect your team from the season’s worst challenges.

Cold Weather Risks: More Than Just a Chill

When temperatures plummet, your body shifts into survival mode, working overtime to keep your core warm. However, this comes at a cost. Blood flow to extremities decreases, raising the risk of frostbite and hypothermia. Add “cold stress” to the mix—a silent danger where prolonged exposure can lead to tissue damage or worse.

Even dehydration doesn’t take a holiday in winter. Frigid air can dry out your body just as much as summer heat, especially since you might not feel thirsty. Without proper hydration, symptoms like fatigue, dizziness, and more severe complications can sneak up fast.

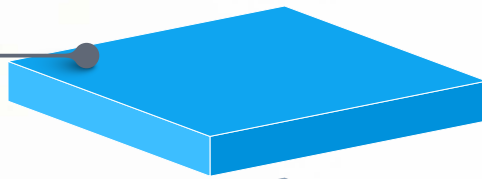


Dress for Success: The Art of Layering

Conquering the cold starts with dressing smart. Think of your outfit as a three-layer defense system:

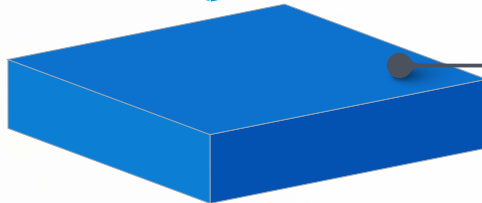
Base Layer

Wool or synthetic fabrics that wick moisture away from the skin. Avoid cotton—it holds onto.



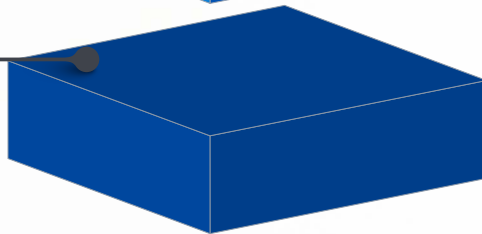
Middle Layer

Insulating materials like fleece to trap body heat, even when damp.



Outer Layer

A wind- and water-resistant shell to shield against the elements.



Complete the ensemble with insulated gloves, waterproof boots, and a hat—because losing heat through your head can make the rest of you feel like a popsicle. Keep an extra change of clothes handy to swap out wet garments if necessary.





Hydration Hacks: Drink Up, Even When It is Cold

Winter might trick you into thinking hydration is less important, but do not be fooled. Dehydration sneaks up when you are not sweating buckets. Stay ahead by keeping a water bottle handy and sipping warm, caffeine-free drinks like herbal tea or cider. These options not only keep you hydrated but also help you stay warm and comfortable.

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Break the Ice: Take Regular Warm-Up Break

Working in the cold does not have to feel like a polar expedition. Schedule frequent breaks in warm, dry areas to reduce exposure and give your body a chance to recover. Keep extra clothes on hand in case yours get damp, and recharge with sweetened fluids to maintain energy levels. a chance to recover. Keep extra clothes on hand in case yours get damp, and recharge with sweetened fluids to maintain energy levels.

Having an emergency survival kit with items like matches, blankets, calorie-dense snacks, and a flashlight is a smart precaution for prolonged outdoor work.

Spot the Warning Signs of Danger

Recognizing the symptoms of cold-related illnesses can save lives:



Frostbite

Look for numbness, waxy or discolored skin, especially on extremities like fingers and toes.

Hypothermia

Shivering, confusion, slowed breathing, and loss of coordination.



Dehydration

Look for numbness, waxy or discolored skin, especially on extremities like fingers and toes.

If you notice these signs, act quickly. Move the person to a warm area, replace wet clothes with dry ones, and seek medical attention. Avoid massaging frostbitten areas or exposing them to direct heat like fires or stoves—these can worsen the injury.





Winter-Proof Your Workplace

Employers play a vital role in ensuring worker safety during cold weather.

Here's how:

PROVIDE PPE

Equip workers with insulated gloves, waterproof boots, and protective outerwear. Encourage dressing in multiple layers.

MONITOR CONDITIONS

Stay updated on wind chill temperatures and adjust work schedules as needed.

EMERGENCY KITS

Ensure workers have access to survival kits with essentials like water, blankets, and calorie-dense snacks.

BUDDY SYSTEM

Train employees to monitor their physical condition and that of their coworkers. Early detection of cold stress can prevent serious injuries.

OFFER TRAINING

Educate employees about wintry weather hazards and first-aid protocols.

For additional tips and resources, check out our [Cold Weather Safety Cards](#). These cards provide quick and essential guidance for staying safe during the coldest months.



Conclusion

Winter safety is not about improvising; it is about planning. By equipping your team with the right gear, hydration habits, and awareness, you can turn frigid temperatures into just another day on the job. After all, a safe team is a productive team—and no one wants to be the person caught out in the cold.

As Dr. Scott Cherry, Chief Medical Officer at Axiom Medical, advises:

“Winter safety starts with preparation. At Axiom Medical, we are committed to helping organizations protect their most valuable asset — their people.”

Contact us to learn more about our workplace health and safety solutions.

www.axiomllc.com or (877) 502-9466

Secure Your Team!

Injuries don't wait, and neither should you! Talk to Axiom Medical today to optimize your workplace health and safety strategy with our Injury Case Management solution.

