

postal|bulletin

PUBLISHED SINCE MARCH 4, 1880

WORKING SAFE IN COLD WEATHER



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**SAFETY
DEPENDS
ON ME!**

UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE



Cover Story

Winter Safety

Working outside during winter presents special challenges for employees who are exposed to cold temperatures and hazardous conditions.

Prolonged exposure to cold temperatures can cause your body to lose heat faster than it's able to produce it, which puts employees at risk of hypothermia or frostbite. Frostbite occurs when skin is exposed to extreme cold for long periods and the skin and underlying tissue freeze. The fingers, toes, and feet are most commonly affected, but other extremities including the nose, ears, and the cheeks can also develop frostbite.

At the first sign of frostbite, get out of the cold. Unless absolutely necessary, do not walk on frostbitten feet or toes. Don't rub the frostbitten area because it will increase tissue damage. Warm the affected area using body heat or by immersing in warm water; avoid using a heating pad, heat lamp, or the heat of a stove, fireplace, or radiator for

warming because direct heat can burn tissue that's already damaged. Drink warm drinks to replace lost fluid. In case of severe frostbite, seek medical attention.

Snow and icy conditions increase the occurrences of slips, trips, and falls resulting in pain and lost productivity due to injuries. Proper footwear is essential for safe walking on slippery surfaces. To prevent slips, trips, and falls, wear grippers (ice cleats), walk with care, take short steps, and only finger mail when it is safe to do so. Take extra precautions when entering and exiting your vehicle — use handrails on steps, and wait for vehicles to stop completely on snow or ice-covered roadways before crossing the street.

Always remember, "Safety Depends on Me."

— *Safety and OSHA Compliance Programs,
Employee Resource Management, 1-21-16*