

S A F E T Y B U L L E T I N

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K S U D i v i s i o n o f F a c i l i t i e s

COLD WEATHER COMING!!!

Tips To Protect Workers In Cold Environments

Prolonged exposure to freezing or cold temperatures may cause serious health problems such as trench foot, frostbite and hypothermia. In extreme cases, including cold water immersion, exposure can lead to death. Danger signs include uncontrolled shivering, slurred speech, clumsy movements, fatigue and confused behavior. If these signs are observed, call for emergency help.

OSHA's Cold Stress Card provides a reference guide and recommendations to combat and prevent many illnesses and injuries. Available in English and Spanish, this laminated fold-up card is free to employers, workers and the public. Tips include:

How to Protect Workers

- Recognize the environmental and workplace conditions that may be dangerous.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of cold-induced illnesses and injuries and what to do to help workers.
- Train workers about cold-induced illnesses and injuries.
- Encourage workers to wear proper clothing for cold, wet and windy conditions, including layers that can be adjusted to changing conditions.
- Be sure workers in extreme conditions take a frequent short break in warm dry shelters to allow their bodies to warm up.
- Try to schedule work for the warmest part of the day.
- Avoid exhaustion or fatigue because energy is needed to keep muscles warm.
- Use the buddy system - work in pairs so that one worker can recognize danger signs.
- Drink warm, sweet beverages (sugar water, sports-type drinks) and avoid drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, sodas or hot chocolate) or alcohol.
- Eat warm, high-calorie foods such as hot pasta dishes.
- Remember, workers face increased risks when they take certain medications, are in poor physical condition or suffer from illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension or cardiovascular disease.

For free copies of OSHA's Cold Stress Card in [English](#) or [Spanish](#), go to OSHA's website, www.osha.gov, or call 1(800) 321-OSHA.

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Damaged Power Cords: Know your electrical supply cord

Power cords on electrical appliances that are moved frequently receive a lot of abuse. These include vacuum cleaners, floor polishers, power tools and other portable appliances. Often, the damage occurs at the plug (i.e., a missing ground prong on a three pronged grounded plug - Figure 1). Damaged and ungrounded power cords pose serious hazards to users of the appliance including electrical shock and risk of fire. Missing ground prongs on power cord plugs usually result from users pulling on the cord to remove the plug from the outlet instead of handling the plug directly. In some cases, the plug may be pulled from the wire covering, exposing the inner wires to damage, as shown in Figures 2 and 3. Power cords can become frayed or damaged from heavy use, age, or excessive current flow through the wiring.

Figure 4 shows a power cord to a shop appliance that was found on a recent inspection. This power cord has been sliced open exposing the inner energized wires. The appliance was still plugged in, ready for use. When a power cord is damaged, the appliance should be removed from service and the cord replaced as soon as possible to reduce the risk of electrical shock, electrocution or fire.

Cord damage can also result when the cord is pinched, caught between or punctured by heavy objects such as legs on a desk. This damage could lead to a short circuit and result in a fire. Also, cords placed under stress, such as when a heavy appliance is hung by its cord, could eventually cause damage to the cord or plug.

For greater detail on power cords, please see Fast Facts on "Power Strips and Daisy Chains" and "Exposed Energized Wiring," available on our website, www.compliance.gov.

			
Figure 1 Ground prong broken off	Figure 2 Wire Cover pulled from plug	Figure 3 Plug pulled from casing & insulation	Figure 4 Frayed cord exposing energized wires

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Please check your equipment for damaged cords. If damaged mark equipment "Damaged Do Not Use". Have the cords repaired or replaced.