

Cold Weather Policy & Procedures

Cold injuries are a common result of exposure to cold environments during physical activity. The occurrence of these injuries are dependent on two factors: low air or water temperature, or both, and the influence of the wind on the body's ability to maintain a non-thermic core temperature due to localized exposure of the extremities to cold air or surfaces.

Early recognition of cold stress is important. Shivering is a means for the body to generate heat and serves as an early warning sign. As cold exposure continues, the body core temperature drops. If the participant wants to lie down and rest, the situation has become a medical emergency and the emergency action plan should be activated.

COMMON COLD INJURIES

Frostnip: a nonfreezing injury of the skin, usually of the fingers, toes, ears, cheeks and chin. Redness, numbness and tingling are present, but no tissue freezing occurs. Symptoms develop when blood vessels supplying the affected tissues narrow because of the cold temperatures. Frost nip occurs at temperatures of 59°F and below.

- Do not rub the affected area, but gently rewarm the skin with clothing or skin contact.

Chillblain: A more significant nonfreezing injury of the skin, which can occur at temperatures at or below 59°F. Swelling of the exposed area is noted due to the rupturing of blood vessels walls in addition to the redness, numbness and tingling of frost nip.

- Do not rub affected area, but gently rewarm the skin with clothing or skin contact.

Frostbite: Frostbite is the destruction of body tissues due to freezing which occurs at temperatures of 32°F and below. Ice crystal formation in the tissue breaks apart cells, therefore destroying the tissues.

- Do not rub. Immerse the affected area in a warm, not hot, bath to reheat quickly.

Hypothermia: Abnormally low core body temperature. Because this happens gradually and affects thinking an athlete may not realize they need help. A body temperature of 95°F or below is a medical emergency and can lead to death if not treated promptly.

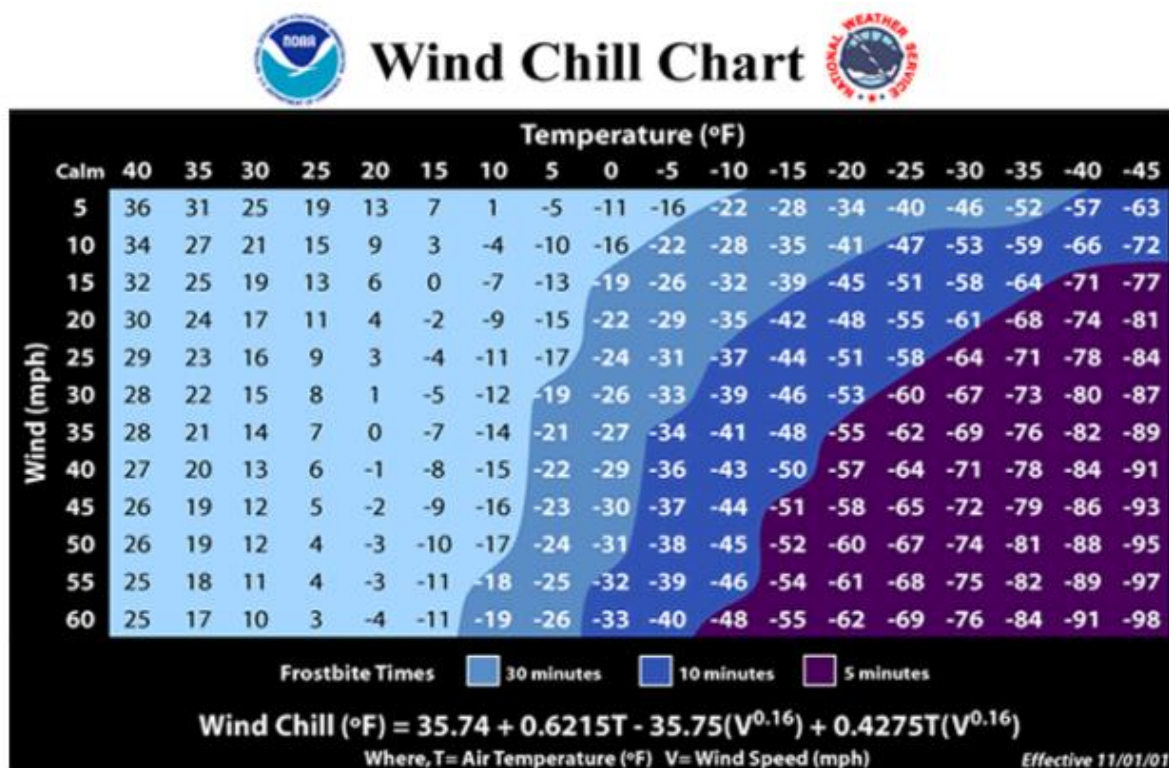
Symptoms include pale, bluish skin, mental and motor impairment, slurred speech, fatigue, decreased or abnormal heart rate and pulse, slow and shallow breathing.

- Warm the body as best as possible and activate EMS.

PREVENTION OF COLD EXPOSURE INJURY

In cold weather temperatures proper layered clothing should be worn and encouraged. These include:

- Several layers around the core of the body to insulate, especially those individuals who are least active.
- Long pants designed to insulate. A nylon shell or wind pant on top serves well as a wind break.
- Long sleeved shirt/sweatshirt/coat designed to block wind and insulate. These may be layered.
- Gloves
- Ear Protection/Hat
- Wicking socks that do not hold moisture inside. Cotton holds and absorbs moisture, wool is a better alternative.
- Athletes who are not dressed adequately for the weather should not be allowed to participate for his or her safety.



** Deriving Wind Chill: Wind chill is a combination of temperature (°F) and wind speed (MPH) and can be derived using the chart below**

GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE AND COMPETITION

The following guidelines can be used in making practice and competition decision:

Wind Chill Temperature	Recommendations
31°F and above	Normal Practice
30°F and below	Be aware of potential for cold injury and notify appropriate personnel of the potential
25°F and below	Provide additional protective clothing, cover as much exposed skin as practice and provide opportunities and facilities for rewarming
15°F and below	Consider modifying activity to limit exposure or to allow more frequent chances to rewarm
0°F and below	Consider terminating or rescheduling activity

