

Consejos de seguridad para el frío de invierno
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En Estados Unidos, más de 700 personas se mueren de hipotermia cada año. Hay mucho más gente que padece de lesiones relacionadas con el frío. Usar ropa apropiada para el clima es una de las mejores maneras de mantenerse seguro y calentito durante la temporada de frío. Usar varias capas de ropa abrigada ayuda a mantener el calor de su cuerpo y mantenerle caliente y seco. Puede ponerse o quitarse una capa según se necesite. Aquí hay unos consejos de seguridad para protegerle este invierno.

- Use varias capas de ropa abrigada
- Use gorra, guantes, botas con suelas antideslizantes y calcetines gruesos.
- Cámbiese de ropa mojada lo antes posible
- Coma y tome alimentos y bebidas calientes
- No salga afuera al menos que sea muy necesario
- Si trabaja afuera, tome cortos descansos en un área con calefacción
- Evite salir afuera si está enfermo o muy cansado
- No salga solo por mucho tiempo
- Busque refugio si se desorienta, o si siente hormigueo o se le adormezca la piel

Staying Safe and Warm in Winter Weather

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During the cold winter months, farmers may be working outdoors in adverse conditions for extended periods of time. Being exposed to extreme cold poses a dangerous situation in which workers can become chilled. The combination of low temperatures and wind chill puts anyone working outdoors at an increased risk of becoming frostbitten or suffering from hypothermia. Frostbite can cause permanent tissue damage and, in severe cases, gangrene. Additionally, more than 700 people die from hypothermia each year in the United States, and the number of injuries related to cold weather is even higher. Dressing appropriately for the weather is one of the best ways to stay safe and warm when working outdoors this winter.

Wearing layers of clothing is a good way to help regulate your body temperature when working in extreme cold. Your outer layer of clothing should have a hood and be wind-resistant. If you wear one heavy outer layer, you may start to sweat. Try using three layers of clothing, including polypropylene thermal underwear, which will wick away moisture. This enables you to add or remove clothing as necessary and helps you stay warm and dry. Layered clothing also creates air pockets that trap warm air close to your body.

Clothing should be loose-fitting to allow for maximum circulation, but be careful of sleeves, scarves or strings that could become entangled in machinery. Always bring extra layers so you can change out of wet clothing as soon as possible. When working in the cold, use insulated waterproof boots that fit loosely enough to allow for thick, warm socks. Make sure boots have a good tread to help prevent slips and falls on icy surfaces.

Don't forget your gloves or mittens! Covering exposed skin as much as possible and keeping your extremities warm can help prevent frostbite and make you feel less cold while working outdoors. Seventy percent or more of the body's heat can be lost through the head, so always wear a hat, preferably one that covers your ears as well.

Even with layered clothing, it is recommended that workers minimize time spent outdoors during extreme wind chill conditions to reduce their risk of exposure. Consuming warm, high-calorie foods and hot drinks can help you stay warm when working in the cold, as well as taking short breaks in heated areas. If working outside for long periods of time, keep moving to increase blood flow and stay warm. Avoid working outside if exhausted or fatigued. Use the buddy system or notify coworkers if you will be working outdoors alone so that someone can regularly check on you. Stop working and seek shelter immediately if you feel disoriented or experience tingling or numbness, as these may be signs of frostbite or hypothermia.

If you work with migrants or Hispanic laborers, keep in mind that they may not be familiar with winter weather and be sure to talk with them about hazards and safe

practices. NYCAMH has resources about working safely in cold weather available under the Farm Safety Materials section of the NYCAMH website, where a variety of occupational safety posters and flyers in English and Spanish are offered in PDF files for downloading and printing. This information is located at www.nycamh.com.

As a NYCAMH farm safety educator, I conduct on-site safety training sessions with Jim Carrabba, which are available to any type of agricultural operation and can be conducted in English and Spanish. In addition to cold weather safety, topics include tractor and machinery training, use of personal protective equipment, chemical safety, personal hygiene, animal handling, and safe lifting and carrying. NYCAMH also offers free on-farm safety surveys that can help you become more aware of potential hazards on your farm. This project is funded by a grant from the New York State Department of Labor Hazard Abatement Board.

Dressing appropriately for the weather and minimizing time spent working outdoors in extreme conditions can help you and your employees stay safe and warm this winter. If you would like more information about staying safe in cold weather, or wish to schedule a farm safety survey or on-site safety training session, please contact me at 800-343-7527 or email me at ameyerhoff@nycamh.com. These surveys and trainings are offered at no cost and are available in English and Spanish. NYCAMH, a program of Bassett Healthcare Network, is enhancing agricultural and rural health by preventing and treating occupational injury and illness.