

Working in Cold Conditions

When we work in cold temperatures, our bodies may experience cold stress. Cold stress occurs when our bodies lose heat faster than they can produce it. Cold stress can put us at risk for hypothermia, a condition in which the body temperature becomes too low. Hypothermia can be life-threatening.

Stage of Hypothermia	Signs & Symptoms
Mild	Shivering; grogginess; problems with thinking
Moderate	Violent shivering; slurred speech; inability to think; shallow, slow breathing; loss of coordination
Severe	Loss of consciousness; little to no breathing; heartbeat slows, varies, or stops

Humidity and wind can worsen the effects of the cold on workers. Freezing temperatures and unprotected contact with frozen metal surfaces can lead to frostbite.

Preparing for Work in Cold Conditions

When cold weather is expected, employers must do a cold stress risk assessment and prepare a cold exposure plan. Employers also need to take steps to protect workers from the cold, such as providing heating, shelters, and/or other effective controls.



Workers need to take steps to protect themselves from the cold:

- Wear layers of clothing rather than one thick layer.
- Wear warm footwear with one or two pairs of thick socks.
- Take frequent, short breaks in warming shelters.
- Drink warm beverages and eat warm, high-calorie foods.

Cold Temperatures Can Affect Cranes

Temperatures below -15°C can affect cranes, and operators need to take more precautions in how they work. Avoid sudden impacts or shocks, and use more caution when hydraulic components are in use. As the temperature drops, the crane's metal becomes more brittle and can break when exposed to impact forces.

In the Interior and northern parts of B.C., temperatures may drop below -30°C . At these temperatures, maximum lifts are often reduced by 40%. Regular check-ins with all workers need to be carried out.

If temperatures drop below -40°C , stopping work for the day is recommended for safety.

OHSR References: Sections [7.33](#) to [7.38](#)

Project: Address:

Employer: Supervisor:

Date: Time: Shift:

Number in crew: Number attending:

Other safety concerns or suggestions:

.....

.....

Record of those attending:

Name: (please print)	Signature:	Company:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		

Manager's remarks:

.....

Manager: Supervisor:

(Signature)

(Signature)

For more information on health and safety requirements for crane operations in B.C., refer to the *Workers Compensation Act* and the OHS Regulation at worksafebc.com.