

# Safety FOCUSED

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## The Importance of Reporting Workplace Hazards

When it comes to hazard reporting, employees should be proactive instead of waiting for an inspection to take place. Read on to learn more.

## Working Safely in the Cold

Employees that work outside in the winter months are at risk of serious health problems, including hypothermia, frostbite, dehydration and muscle injuries. Read on to learn how to protect yourself from the cold.

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## Common Reasons Workplace Hazards Go Unreported

In order to ensure a safe and healthy workplace, organisations rely on their employees to report safety concerns. While hazard reporting is critical for discovering and addressing risks, many employees avoid it. The following are some reasons why workplace hazards go unreported:

- **Employees lack the time.** It can be easy to be distracted by daily work and not take the time to fulfil extra responsibilities. However, if you notice a hazard, it's important to notify your supervisor to ensure the safety of you and your co-workers.
- **Employees don't know how to report the hazard.** Sometimes employees may notice a safety issue, but don't report it because they don't know how. In these instances, it's important to ask your supervisor to teach you hazard reporting processes.
- **Employees are concerned about getting in trouble.** If a hazard is the result of negligence, employees may worry about repercussions for identifying an issue. However, hazard reporting isn't about discipline, but rather prevention and correction. Employees should feel empowered to speak with their supervisors about workplace issues without worrying about getting in trouble.

When it comes to hazard reporting, employees should be proactive instead of waiting for an inspection to take place.

## Working Safely in the Cold

Employees that work outside in the winter months are at risk of serious health problems, including hypothermia, frostbite, dehydration and muscle injuries. What's more, frigid temperatures can also cause additional pain for those who suffer from arthritis and rheumatism.

Common symptoms of cold-related illnesses and injuries include uncontrollable shivering, slurred speech, clumsy movements, fatigue, confusion, white or greyish skin, skin that feels waxy and numbness.

To reduce the risk of cold-induced injuries, consider doing the following:

- Layer clothing to keep warm enough to be safe, but cool enough to avoid perspiring excessively. Layered clothing should contain the following:
  - An inner layer of synthetic weave to keep perspiration away from the body

- A middle layer of wool or synthetic fabric to absorb sweat and retain body heat
- An outer layer designed to protect from wind chill and allow for ventilation

- Wear a hat.
- Place heat packets in gloves, vests, boots and hats to add heat to the body.

It's important to note that many people do not notice they are suffering from cold-related illnesses because their tissue is numb. Therefore, it is wise for employees to check on each other periodically when working outdoors in the cold.

If employees experience any symptoms of cold-related illnesses and injuries, they should get indoors, alert their supervisor and call for medical attention if symptoms do not subside.



## HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia occurs when body temperatures fall **below 35° C**. Wearing the proper protective clothing can prevent this potentially deadly condition.

