Climate Change at Work How Severe Weather Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

Severe weather is no longer rare or predictable; it’s becoming part of the everyday reality at work. Heatwaves, heavy rain, storms, flooding, and extreme conditions can change a normal workday into a high-risk situation in minutes. Being prepared and aware is what keeps changing weather from turning into serious incidents.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Severe weather introduces fast-changing conditions that can turn routine work into high-risk situations with little warning. Severe weather can escalate quickly, and delays in reacting or poor planning can increase the severity of injuries or outcomes during evacuations, shelter situations, or outdoor work.

Extreme Weather Exposure

Heatwaves, cold, heavy rain, and storms can affect the body quickly, leading to heat exhaustion, dehydration, hypothermia, reduced focus, or slower reaction time.

Unstable and Changing Work Conditions

Rain, flooding, wind, and debris can make surfaces slippery or unstable, increasing the risk of slips, trips, falls, and struck by injuries from moving or falling objects.

Reduced Visibility and Awareness

Fog, heavy rain, or poor lighting conditions can limit visibility, making it harder to see hazards, equipment, or other workers, increasing the chance of collisions or mistakes.

Equipment and Infrastructure Risks

High winds, lightning, and extreme conditions can damage equipment, power lines, or structures, creating risks of electrical hazards, falling materials, or sudden failures.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Severe weather safety starts with staying ahead of conditions, not reacting once things go wrong. The goal is to stay aware, adjust early, and never treat changing weather as routine.

Stay Aware of Your Surroundings

Wind, water, and debris can change the work area fast. Keep scanning for hazards, unstable ground, or anything that could shift or fall.

Check Conditions Before You Start

- Don’t assume the day will stay the same. Look at the forecast, watch for changes, and plan your work around weather risks before stepping into the task.
- Weather can shift quickly, so your plan should too. If surfaces become slick, winds pick up, or visibility drops, slow down, change tasks, or stop work if needed.

Respect Equipment and Infrastructure Risks

Avoid working near damaged structures, power lines, or unstable equipment during storms or high winds. Do not assume systems are safe after weather impact.

Know When to Stop Work

Not all conditions are safe to work in. If weather creates unsafe conditions, stop and reassess. Continuing in unsafe weather increases the chance of serious incidents.

Protect Yourself from Exposure

Your body is directly affected by extreme conditions, so manage it

throughout the day.

- Stay hydrated and take breaks during heat
- Dress in layers and protect against cold or rain

Be Ready for Emergencies

- Have a plan before something happens. Know where to go, how to communicate, and what to do if conditions escalate quickly.
- Staying safe in severe weather is about timing, awareness, and knowing when to act early instead of reacting too late.

FINAL WORD

Severe weather doesn’t wait for the right moment, and it doesn’t give second chances. When you stay aware, adjust early, and know when to stop, you stay in control of the risk. The weather may change fast, but your decisions are what keep you safe.