Climate Change at Work How Severe Weather Stats and Facts

FACTS

- **Extreme Heat Exposure:** High temperatures increase the risk of heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and dehydration, especially for outdoor and non-climate-controlled workers.
- **Severe Cold Conditions:** Cold weather can cause frostbite, hypothermia, and reduced dexterity, increasing the likelihood of mistakes and injuries.
- **Storm and High Wind Hazards:** Strong winds and storms can lead to falling objects, structural instability, and loss of control of equipment.
- **Flooding and Water Hazards:** Heavy rainfall and flooding can create unstable ground, hidden hazards, and electrical risks in affected work areas.
- **Reduced Visibility Conditions:** Fog, heavy rain, snow, and smoke can limit visibility, increasing the risk of vehicle incidents and struck-by hazards.
- **Unpredictable Weather Changes:** Rapid shifts in weather conditions can catch workers unprepared, leading to exposure and unsafe decision-making.
- **Infrastructure and Power Failures:** Severe weather can disrupt power, communication, and safety systems, increasing risk during ongoing operations.

STATS

- In the United States, heat exposure caused 436 workplace fatalities between 2011 and 2022, with recent years showing an increasing trend due to extreme temperatures (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- U.S. data shows that thousands of workers suffer heat-related illnesses each year, particularly in construction, agriculture, and outdoor industries (OSHA and CDC,

2021–2023).

- In Canada, exposure to environmental conditions is a recognized cause of workplace injury, including heat and cold stress incidents reported in recent years (Association of Workers’ Compensation Boards of Canada).
- U.S. occupational data indicates that transportation incidents during severe weather remain a leading cause of workplace fatalities, especially in rain, snow, and storm conditions (BLS CFOI, 2021–2023).
- In Canada, winter conditions contribute significantly to workplace injuries, including slips, falls, and vehicle incidents during icy or snowy conditions (AWCBC, 2021–2023).
- U.S. reports show that fatalities due to lightning strikes, storms, and environmental exposure continue to occur in outdoor occupations, particularly in construction and utility work (NOAA and BLS, recent years).