Wind Chill Index Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. Wind chill can lead to frostbite, hypothermia and, ultimately, death.
2. Frostbite is caused by freezing of the skin and underlying tissues. It’s most common on the fingers, toes, nose, ears, cheeks and chin, according to the Mayo Clinic. Severe cases can kill body tissue.
3. Hypothermia occurs when your body loses heat faster than it can produce it, the Mayo Clinic says. Left untreated, it can lead to the failure of the heart and respiratory system and, eventually, death.
4. Winter weather conditions can bring severe and chilling dangers, including slip and fall accidents, cold stress, and exposure-related injuries. Learn how to best prevent these incidents and what your worker rights are.
5. Exposure to severe winter weather and cold temperatures can lead to serious injury and even death. For those working outdoors, especially, winter weather conditions can bring severe and chilling dangers, including slip and fall accidents, cold stress, and exposure-related injuries.
6. Working from elevated heights in winter-weather conditions can also bring significant and sometimes fatal risks. Snow-covered rooftops may hide fall-through hazards like skylights and electrical dangers from powerlines and snow removal equipment. In the construction industry sector, falls are the leading cause of death.
7. Aside from slip and fall accidents, workers may also be at risk of injury from cold stress and exposure. When an individual is unable to warm his or herself, serious cold-related illnesses and injuries may occur that can lead to permanent tissue damage or even death.

STATS

- Cold and winter weather-related accidents are common. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in 2017, there were over 20,000 occupational injuries related to ice, sleet and snow, 14 % (2,890 cases) of which occurred in New York State.
- Among the most vulnerable to exposure are those who work outdoors, including trade occupations like construction, agriculture, and fishing, as well as first responders, recreational workers, and snow cleanup crews. Jobs that involve frequent exposure to lower temperature areas, such as freezer storage workers, may also be at higher risk for cold-related injuries.
- Instead of just falling snow and sleet, winter weather forecasts could also call for falling workers. In 2014, there were 42,480 workplace injuries and illnesses involving ice, sleet, or snow that required at least one day away from work to recuperate. These resulted from falls, slips or trips; overexertion and bodily reaction; transportation incidents; and contact with objects and equipment. Among these injuries and illnesses were 34,860, or 82 %, that were due to falls on the same level (that is, not from falls from heights or through surfaces).
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that, on average, at least 1,000 people die each year from the condition that strikes when a person’s core temperature dips below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. The stages of hypothermia begin when the body is losing heat faster than it can produce it. The condition typically affects people who abuse alcohol or drugs, elderly and very young people and the generally unhealthy, the National Institutes of Health says. Even babies who sleep in cold rooms can develop hypothermia, the CDC says.