

The Freezin' Season

The Chilling Facts about Cold Stress:

Cold stress can be brought on by low land temperatures, even if above freezing, and water temperatures below



98.6°F/37°C. When the cold body is unable to warm itself, serious cold related illnesses, such as hypothermia may occur, and permanent tissue damage and

even death may result. Cold related illnesses can slowly overcome a person who has been chilled by low temperatures, brisk winds, or wet clothing.

It just so happens, the Pacific Northwest experiences that power packed cold/wet combination of conditions throughout winter. Staying warm and dry is key!

The Body's Response to Cold:

When cold, your body will go into action to keep warm and the colder it gets, the more your body works to protect its vital organs and keep warm. Tiny muscles in the skin called erector pilli stand straight up, and fine arteries at the surface of your skin constrict to reduce surface blood flow. Muscle tension builds as cold increases, gradually leading to shivering which generates heat to warm the internal organs.



**Call OHSU's Weather Hotline
for current conditions: 503-494-9021**

SafetyNews Questions or suggestions?

Environmental Health & Radiation Safety: **503-494-7795**

Be Aware and Be Prepared:

Know the signs and stages of hypothermia, check the weather, and be prepared so that your commute, your work and your play are safe and comfortable.

Naturally, we strive to select proper clothing for our day and layer clothing to adjust to changing temperatures and precipitation. Those of us who spend part of the workday outdoors are at greater risk of exposure.

Here is a link to OSHA's cold stress resource where you'll find detailed descriptions of the stages of cold stress, and ways to prevent such occurrences:



<http://www.osha.gov/Publications/coldcard/coldcard.html>

Decorating by the Book



OHSU's Holiday Décor Policy

Familiar with the [OHSU Holiday Decorations Safety Policy](#)? If you enjoy festive decorations in your area during the holiday season, this is a must read! You'll find all the details to guide you regarding safe placement, condition of electrical decorations, and observance of best practices for fire safety.



You'll find the most current policy along with others at:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/policies/ehrs.cfm>



Topic of the Month:

SLIPS, TRIPS, and FALLS

Slips, trips and falls happen more often than they should at OHSU, and these accidents can create serious injuries, cost money to treat, and take weeks or months to heal. All of this can prevent you from living the life you want. Most of these accidents can be avoided if you are alert to potential hazards. The following tips can help keep you healthy.



SLOW DOWN – Trips and falls occur most often when people are in a hurry. Short cuts are often the culprit! We all have tried to jump over something instead of walking "the long way around" to our destination. Learn to slow down and avoid potentially hazardous short-cuts.

WEAR GOOD SHOES – Walkways and walking surfaces at OHSU vary in slope and surface texture. Shoes with slip-resistant soles and a flat heel will reduce the chances of a fall. Be aware of the kind of terrain you'll be covering throughout the day and plan accordingly.

PAY ATTENTION – Watch where you are walking. Learning to recognize and avoid hazards saves time, money, and injuries. Areas not designed for foot traffic often consist of unstable, shaky, or slippery surfaces.

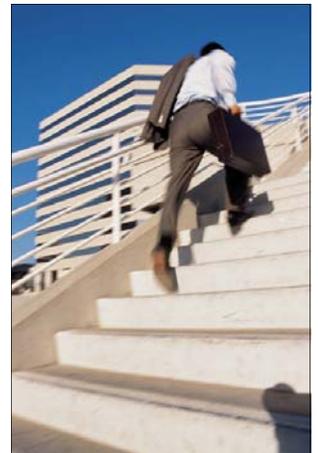


CLEAN UP SPILLS – Wet or slippery surfaces sometimes don't appear dangerous until you walk on them, and then it's too late. Clean up all spills, including liquids and solids or powders, as soon as you notice them. If it's not your area, please notify someone who can clean it up.

WALK SAFELY – If you have to walk on slippery or wet surfaces, take slow, short steps. Use handrails when walking on ramps and stairs. Also, take your hands out of your pockets in case you need them. Don't try to run, jump or slide across slick surfaces.

GOOD LIGHTING – Good lighting can help you spot hazards long before you get to them. Poor lighting can prevent you from seeing what is in the way. When you enter a dark room, always turn on the light even if you don't need to stay very long. Keep walkways clear of obstructions in areas that have lower light levels. Facilities and Real Estate (F&RE) can replace light fixtures or bulbs, as needed.

USE STAIRS SAFELY – It is easy to lose your footing when walking up or down stairs. Be cautious of worn or broken steps, and of lighting that might make it difficult to see properly. Never run up or down stairs, and avoid skipping steps. If you have to carry items while climbing stairs, be sure that your vision is not blocked. Try to keep one hand on the rail... it is often too late to grab it when you are falling.



STEP STOOL OR LADDER – When you need to get something from a shelf higher than your shoulders, use a step stool or ladder. Chairs are NOT meant for standing on and will almost always move when you do!

TELL SOMEBODY – Remember to report slips, trips and falls as well as near misses to [Risk Management](#) by way of [WSIRS](#) (Worker & Student Injury Reporting System for employees and students) or [PSN](#) (Patient Safety Net for patients and visitors).

Holiday Safety at Home

Many of us decorate our homes to celebrate the season, but it is important to give consideration to common safety hazards:

Lights & Electric

- As you pull lights out of storage, check for frayed wires and broken bulbs. Make sure they're approved for outdoor use.
- Plug only as many light strands into one cord or circuit as recommended. Follow manufacturer's recommendations or consult an electrician.
- When stringing outside lights, keep ladders and decorations away from overhead power lines.
- Do not use metal staples or nails as fasteners for lights.
- Don't run electric extension cords across driveways or where people may trip on them.



Fire & Combustion

- If you choose to have a real tree indoors, use a stand with a built-in water reservoir and make sure to keep it full.
- The drier a tree or decorative greenery is, the more combustible it becomes. After the holidays put these out for recycle before they become dry. (This also saves extra clean-up of all those little needles!)
- Never leave candles unattended. When candles are lit, make sure a responsible person is in the room. When you leave or go to sleep, blow them out.
- Always keep open flames away from all combustibles such as drapes, paper, and walls. Remember, concentrated heat rises and poses a hazard.



For a current issue of SafetyNews online, and for archives, visit:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/safety/gen/safetynews.cfm>

The SafetyTeam page is available at:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/safety/gen/safetyteam.cfm>

These pages are updated regularly. If there are OHSU resources you'd like to see linked, please send suggestions to the SafetyTeam Coordinator at:

safeteam@ohsu.edu

GENERAL LABORATORY SAFETY

EHRIS is initiating a lab survey process to remind and educate researchers about chemical safety, biosafety, and general safety.

You'll find General and Laboratory Safety Training on Big Brain for all laboratory researchers.



For questions concerning laboratory safety or to request an in-lab training seminar

at Central & Waterfront campuses, please contact Debra Brickey, PhD, Lab Safety Advisor: 503-494-0655 or brickeyd@ohsu.edu

For West Campus, contact Dan Toyooka at: 503-690-5339 or toyookad@ohsu.edu

Questions? Ask Environmental Health & Radiation Safety:

503-494-7795

