

Winter Weather Hazard Alert

In 2023, winter weather conditions accounted for 100 workplace fatalities in the United States¹. Between 2003 and 2023, 70 Oregon workers died from adverse winter weather conditions. These events underscore the importance of recognizing and preparing for winter weather hazards that are becoming increasingly common and severe due to climate instability.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2025, August 14). Weather contributed to 100 workplace fatalities in 2023. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2025/weather-contributed-to-100-workplace-fatalities-in-2023.htm>

Please observe the following safety tips:

Cold Stress Safety Tips:

- Employers should provide training on winter-related hazards, steps to prevent cold stress illnesses and injuries, how to recognize the signs and symptoms of cold stress illnesses and injuries, and how to respond in case of a cold stress-related emergency.
- Employers should provide rest breaks in heated areas, appropriate acclimatization schedules, and schedule work during the warmer parts of the day.
- Workers who are new to the job, climate, or conditions should gradually build up a tolerance to cold conditions by working shorter periods and taking more frequent breaks in warm areas.
- Employees should dress appropriately for working in cold conditions. Dressing in layers provides better insulation. Avoid tight-fitting clothing and wearing wet clothing. Be sure to protect vulnerable areas, such as the head, face, hands, and feet. Carry extra socks, gloves, hats, jackets, and a spare change of clothes in case items become wet or need to be replaced.



Winter Driving Safety Tips:

- Employers should ensure all vehicles and equipment operated by employees are well maintained and implement an effective maintenance program. Additionally, employers should set and enforce driver safety policies.

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Safety tips (continued)

- Employers should ensure that all vehicles are equipped with proper tire traction devices, such as chains or snow socks, as well as emergency kits. For more information about tire traction devices, refer to Oregon Department of Transportation's Winter Driving Tips below. Recommendations for emergency kit items are available on OSHA's Winter Website (see below).
- When driving in winter conditions, employees should: allow extra time for travel, check weather and road conditions in advance, be familiar with routes and directions, and inform of their travel plans, including when and where they will be traveling.

Slips, Trips, and Falls Safety Tip:

- To reduce the risk of slips, trips, and falls, employers should promptly clear snow and ice from walkways and apply deicer. When walking on snow or ice can't be avoided, employees should be trained to wear appropriate footwear with good traction and insulation and to use safe walking techniques, such as taking short steps and moving at a slower pace.

Safety tips sources: <https://www.osha.gov/winter-weather/cold-stress#:~:text=Monitor%20workers%20physical%20condition,controls%20such%20as%20radiant%20heaters>
<https://www.osha.gov/winter-weather/hazards#clearingsnow>

Winter Weather Preparedness Resources

Oregon Department of Transportation
Winter Driving Tips:
<https://www.oregon.gov/odot/pages/winter-driving.aspx>

Occupational Safety and Health
Administration (OSHA) Winter Weather:
<https://www.osha.gov/winter-weather/hazards#clearingsnow>

Oregon OSHA Cold Stress:
<https://osha.oregon.gov/pages/topics/cold-stress.aspx>

OSHA Cold Stress Guide:
<https://www.osha.gov/emergency-preparedness/guides/cold-stress>

Oregon Health Authority Preparing for
Winter Storms:
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/preparedness/prepare/pages/prepareforwinterstorms.aspx>

Examples of Fatal Stories

Case 1: A 53-year-old logging worker who was serving as a watchman died of hypothermia after becoming stranded in the forest. He had been exposed to the elements overnight and possibly longer. He became stranded after his ATV high centered and got stuck on a ground level stump. Due to a previous condition that caused him significant difficulty walking, he was unable to reach shelter after his ATV became disabled.

Case 2: A 47-year-old roofer was attempting to tie off while changing anchor points on a roof, when he slipped on ice. As a result, the roofer fell 44 feet to the ground and died.

Case 3: A 62-year-old tractor/trailer driver died from injuries he sustained in a collision after he lost control of his vehicle. He was driving westbound on an interstate highway and lost control when his vehicle hit an icy patch on the road.



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