



WINTER IS COMING... ARE YOU READY?

By Eric Henzie, Product Marketing Manager

Like it or not, winter will be here before we all know it. And now is the best time to start thinking about your plan of attack in order to get out in front of it. No matter what winter looks like for you – be it blizzard conditions, brutally cold temperatures, or heavy rain – this change in working conditions is something that has to be prepared for to ensure you’re able to tackle the season head-on.

While preparation for changing environmental conditions can include a variety of factors, we’ve boiled it down to three key areas to focus on as you get ready to battle the elements in the coming months: Combating Cold Stress, Dressing Right for the Elements and Creating A Safe Work Practice Game Plan. Whether you’re a seasoned foreman or a road warrior in the trenches, this blog can serve either as a quick checklist or guide that supports a seamless transition into the challenging working conditions that the winter season brings with it.

COMMON TYPES OF COLD STRESS



FROSTBITE

Freezing of the skin and tissues typically affecting the extremities that can cause permanent damage.



HYPOTHERMIA

When core body temperature drops below 95°F. Can also occur at temperatures above 40°F when wet from rain, or damp from sweat.



TRENCH FOOT

A non-freezing injury of the feet caused by prolonged exposure to wet and cold conditions.

COMBATING COLD STRESS

Before we dive in, let’s quickly review what cold stress is. Cold stress results from the body’s inability to warm itself. It typically occurs when cold temperatures, high wind, dampness or exposure to cold water causes skin temperature to drop quickly. Eventually, these environmental factors force the body to work harder to maintain its core internal body temperature – meaning energy is expelled on staying warm instead of focusing on the task at hand. Now that we know what cold stress is, we can discuss how to dress properly to combat it.



Keeping extremities protected from extremely cold temperatures, wind chill and getting damp or wet is the fourth prong when dressing right for the elements



DRESSING RIGHT FOR THE ELEMENTS

Properly dressing for inclement weather and being aware of how your body is reacting to the conditions are two key aspects of preventing cold stress – especially when cold temperatures cannot be avoided. Layering, specifically a three-layer system, provides better insulation. We recommend the following:

- An inner layer of wool, silk or synthetic (polypropylene) fabric keeps moisture away from the body. Thermal wear, wool, silk or polypropylene inner layers hold more body heat than cotton.
- A middle layer of wool or synthetic fabric provides insulation even when wet.
- An outer layer that provides wind and rain protection that allows ventilation to prevent overheating.

Now that we know common causes of cold stress and how to dress properly for whatever your working conditions may be, we can focus on creating a safe work practice plan.

CREATING A SAFE WORK PRACTICE GAME PLAN

Both employers and employees share the responsibility of preparing to work in cold weather conditions. At a minimum, employers need to train workers on how to recognize the symptoms of cold stress and develop plans to identify potential hazards that include an actionable safety response. Depending on the scenario, employers may be in a position to equip workers with proper winter PPE – if this is not the case, then guidance on selecting proper garments for the specific conditions workers will endure should be provided. If you are searching for a resource that details out a safe work practice plan for winter conditions, [check out this article from OSHA.](#)

Since cold stress symptoms can appear suddenly or over a long stretch of time, self-monitoring and monitoring other coworkers for cold stress symptoms is extremely important. Cold stress is common but it's also avoidable if you engage in the proper preparation.

Looking for a recommendation on the best PPE for winter weather? PIP[®] offers functional and transitional outerwear that feature built-in layering features in addition to thermal gloves and headwear that are designed to combat cold stress.





NEW Ripstop 3-in-1 Two-Tone Jackets

- Versatile jacket ideal for extreme weather conditions that offer workers the ability to remove layers as the weather changes throughout their shift
- Durable 150D Ripstop polyester outer shell delivers a lightweight feel with heavyweight protection
- Double front storm flap with zipper closure and removable inner grid fleece jacket delivers additional insulation and efficiently wicks moisture away from the skin



NEW Insulated G-Tek® PolyKor® Cut Resistant Seamless Knit Single-Layer PolyKor / Acrylic Gloves

- Featuring a double-dipped Latex MicroSurface grip ideal for wet, cold weather conditions and for applications where hand dexterity is required
- Available in two styles: ANSI A4 41-8014 and the fully coated ANSI A5 41-8035



NEW PIP® Thermal EXO Balaclava

- Dual-layer provides form-fitting comfort and protection from extreme weather conditions by sealing out cold temperatures, wind and snow
- Uses innovative fabric technology that harnesses heat from the sun's powerful solar rays, enhancing the warming effect of the material up to 15° F (10°C)
- Machine washable and functional – easily tucks into jackets and can be worn multiple ways as a neck gaiter or a full-face mask



PIP® Heat Packs

- Air activated hand warmers are designed to provide additional warmth in gloves and headwear
- Fast-activating heat packs reach full temperature in 2-5 minutes and generate more than 8 hours of warmth
- Heating can be suspended at any time by resealing the inserts in an airtight container

Set yourself up for success this winter season. By focusing your efforts on identifying how you plan to Combat Cold Stress, Dress Properly for the Elements and Create a Safe Work Practice Game Plan, you position yourself to end the year strong and kick-off the year ahead on the right (healthy) foot. If you're interested in learning more about PIP's broad offering of cold weather PPE that's specifically designed to prevent cold stress in a variety of applications, [click here](#) or [contact your local PIP® Sales Representative today](#).