



Company _____ Job Name _____ Date _____

Maine Chapter

Weekly Tool Box Talk: Hypothermia

When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. Body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well. This makes hypothermia particularly dangerous because a person may not know it is happening and won't be able to do anything about it. Hypothermia occurs most commonly at very cold environmental temperatures, but can occur even at cool temperatures (above 40°F) if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat, or submersion in cold water.

Who is most at risk for hypothermia?

Victims of hypothermia are most often:

- elderly people with inadequate food, clothing, or heating
- babies sleeping in cold bedrooms
- children left unattended
- adults under the influence of alcohol
- mentally ill individuals
- people who remain outdoors for long periods—the homeless, hikers, hunters, etc.

What are the warning signs for hypothermia?

Adults:

- shivering/exhaustion
- confusion/fumbling hands
- memory loss/slurred speech
- drowsiness

Infants:

- bright red, cold skin
- very low energy

What should I do if I see someone with warning signs of hypothermia?

If you notice signs of hypothermia, take the person's temperature. If it is below 95°, the situation is an emergency—get medical attention immediately.

If medical care is not available, begin warming the person, as follows:

- get the victim into a warm room or shelter
- if the victim has on any wet clothing, remove it
- warm the center of the body first—chest, neck, head, and groin—using an electric blanket, if available, or use skin-to-skin contact under loose, dry layers of blankets, clothing, towels, or sheets.
- warm beverages can help increase the body temperature, but do NOT give alcoholic beverages. Do not try to give beverages to an unconscious person.
- after body temperature has increased, keep the person dry and wrapped in a warm blanket, including the head and neck.
- get medical attention as soon as possible.

Safety Recommendations: _____

Job Specific Topics: _____

M.S.D.S. Reviewed: _____

Attended By:
