

# Cold Weather Safety

## HYPOTHERMIA AND FROSTBITE

### HYPOTHERMIA

When exposed to cold temperatures, your body loses heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold uses up your body's stored energy. The result is hypothermia. Body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well.

Hypothermia can occur at cold and cool temperatures (above 4°C) if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat or submersion in cold water.

#### What to do:

- Get medical attention immediately.
- Lay the person down and avoid rough handling, particularly if the person is unconscious.
- Get the person indoors.
- Gently remove wet clothing.
- Warm the person gradually and slowly.

### FROSTBITE

Frostbite is an injury to the body caused by freezing. It causes a loss of feeling and color and most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes. Frostbite can permanently damage the body, and severe cases can lead to amputation. The risk increases in people with reduced blood circulation and among people who are not dressed properly.

#### What to do:

- Get medical help!
- Do not rub or massage the area.
- Do not warm the area until you can ensure it will stay warm.
- Warm the area gradually; use body heat, or warm water (40°C to 42°C). Avoid direct heat which can burn the skin.

Centre for Disease Control and Government of Canada



Environmental Health and Safety

[www.mun.ca](http://www.mun.ca)