

# RISK ALERT

## SURVIVING THE COLD

*Working outside during winter can be a chilling experience. For workers, cold weather can be a serious hazard. Construction, trucking, farming and logging are examples of occupations where the potential for hypothermia and frostbite exists. There are also safety problems associated with working in cold environments – ice, snow, burns from contact with cold metal, slowed reaction time and snow blindness.*

### Wear appropriate clothing.

You are properly clothed for the outdoors if you can work comfortably.

### Use personal protective equipment (PPE).

Protecting yourself from the cold should not interfere with the use of your PPE.

### Take it slowly.

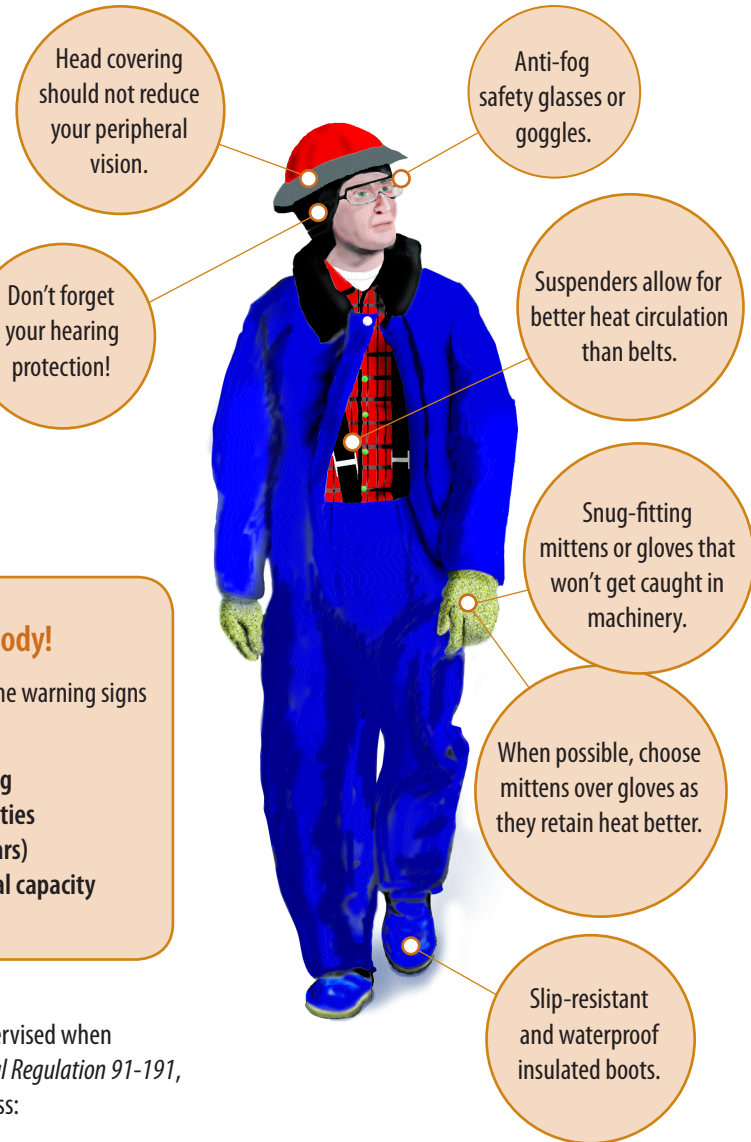
Your work pace should not cause heavy sweating that will result in wet clothing. Layers of clothing should be removed or added in accordance with your body temperature.

A healthy worker who is properly protected and takes reasonable precautions can function efficiently and safely in cold environments.

### It's the law!

It is the employer's responsibility to ensure employees are properly attired and supervised when working under extreme cold conditions. Sections 22 and subsection 23(2) of *General Regulation 91-191*, under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, set out the requirements for cold stress:

- Proper clothing
- Frequent measurement of temperature (with wind factor) – see paragraph 22(a)
- Taking warm-up breaks in a shelter – see paragraph 22(b)
- Instruction on signs of hypothermia and frostbite



**Listen to your body!**  
Learn to recognize the warning signs of hypothermia.

- Severe shivering
- Pain in extremities (hands, feet, ears)
- Reduced mental capacity

### Layered clothing

- 1st layer** – snug-fitting and allows sweat to escape
- 2nd layer** – loose and warm
- 3rd layer** – windproof and waterproof