

# SAFETY TIP OF THE WEEK



## Cold Weather

▪ Temperatures are expected to gradually drop over the next several days increasing the potential for cold weather injuries. The night time and early morning lows will remain around freezing for the remainder of the week. Temperatures this low can cause icing conditions on overpasses and bridges. Outside unprotected water pipes can freeze

## Cold Weather Hazards

▪ **Chilblain** is a nonfreezing cold injury, which while painful, causes little or no permanent damage. The affected skin becomes tender, red, swollen, and hot to the touch and may itch, ache and become numb. Chilblain can develop in only a few hours.

▪ **Superficial Frostbite** symptoms include burning, numbness, tingling, itching, or cold sensations in the affected areas. The regions appear white and frozen, but if you press on them, they retain some resistance. Superficial frostbite typically affects smaller, more exposed areas of the body, such as your fingers, toes, nose, ears, cheeks and chin.

▪ **Hypothermia** is a life threatening condition in which body temperature falls below 95° F. Body temperature can fall even when air temperatures are above freezing if conditions are windy and clothing is wet. A person with hypothermia usually isn't aware of their condition. Symptoms often begin gradually and the confused thinking associated with hypothermia prevents self-awareness. Shivering is your body's automatic defense against cold temperature. Constant shivering is a key sign of hypothermia. Working around operating aircraft or prolonged periods without physical movement can increase the potential of hypothermia.

▪ **Slip, trip and falls injuries** occur more often in cold weather. Frozen water from lawn sprinklers on walkways is the most likely cause of falls here in California. Monitor water usage to prevent runoff. Use salt, sand or cat litter to prevent falls.



## Winter Driving Tips

▪ **Make sure your vehicle is in good working order.** Check brakes, windshield wipers, defroster, heater and exhaust system are in top condition. Check tires for proper inflation. Temperatures below freezing, can lower air pressure.

▪ **Check the weather.** Make the weather forecast and road conditions check part of your daily routine during the winter. Awareness of conditions will help you be more prepared. A check of local roads conditions can be located at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/cgi-bin/roads.cgi> or Caltrans Highway Information Network at 800-427-7623

▪ **Allow extra travel time** during inclement weather. A highway speed of 65 miles per hour may be safe in dry weather, but result in an accident in icy conditions. Bridge decks and shady spots icy when other areas are not. Avoid sudden stops and quick direction changes.

▪ **Keep your gas tank full.** It may be necessary to change routes or turn back during a storm. Increased potential for traffic delays due to weather or accidents.

## Cold Weather Hazards

▪ **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning** from unapproved heating sources. Early symptoms of include headaches, nausea, and fatigue. These symptoms are often mistaken for the flu. Ensure you have working carbon monoxide detectors in your home.

▪ **Fire hazards** due to supplemental heating sources such as space heaters. Space heaters should be plugged directly into outlets to avoid overloaded circuits. Ensure there is plenty of space to avoid drapes or clothing from catching fire..

▪ **Prior Cold weather injuries** are more susceptible to cold weather injuries. Individuals who have sustained frostbite, chilblain or some other cold weather injury should be identified to prevent further injury.

▪ **Dehydration** is often associated with hot weather but is just as prevalent in colder temperatures. There is a tendency to drink more caffeine, which is a diuretic. Maintain proper hydration and nutrition. During cold-weather operations, consume at least half a quart of water with each meal and before going to sleep. An additional half quart should be consumed every half hour during the workday (more, if the work is strenuous enough to cause sweat).

▪ **Loss of situational Awareness** during cold weather can lead to accident and injury. Often additional clothing or headgear makes the individual less aware of surrounding hazards. Often focus is on staying warm and not what is going on around you. Wear clothes in layers. Layered clothing allows the individual to adjust to changes in temperature or workload. Adjust headgear to allow you to hear.