COLD WEATHER INJURIES IN MONTANA

66 work-related injuries related to cold weather occurred January 2013-December 2017 in Montana, based on workers’ compensation claims data.

- 27% of cold-weather injuries affected the worker’s fingers
- 18% of cold-weather injuries affected the worker’s foot
- 94% of the injuries were frostbite or other effects of exposure to low temperatures

Transportation and Warehousing was the industry with the most cold-weather injury claims (17% of claims), followed by Construction (11%) and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil & Gas Extraction (11%).

December 2016 saw more cold-weather injuries (12 injuries) than any other month since January 2013.

Safety Tips:
- Take frequent breaks to warm-up during cold weather conditions
- Wear breathable layers, warm hats, and insulated waterproof boots & gloves to protect the ears, face, hands, and feet
- Avoid touching cold metal surfaces with bare skin
- Try to avoid working when fatigued: energy is needed to keep muscles warm
- Drink as much water as you would in the summer to prevent dehydration
- Have a way to communicate with workers in remote locations
- If possible, schedule work during the warmest part of the day
- Provide warm liquids to drink during breaks, avoiding caffeine or alcohol
- Prevent slips, trips, and falls on snow and ice by taking shorter, slower steps and wearing footwear with good traction and insulation

Sources:
“Out in the Cold” by Alan Ferguson, Safety & Health Magazine, November 25, 2017
OSHA Quick Card—Protecting Workers from Cold Stress
Montana Department of Labor & Industry Workers’ Compensation Data

NOTEWORTHY NEWS

Sign up for free safety training at SafetyFestMT in Kalispell: January 8-11!

Health & Safety Resources:
“Protecting Yourself from Cold Stress” - symptoms and first aid facts about hypothermia, frostbite, trench foot, and chilblains

Work/Warm-up Schedule - recommendations on when to schedule work-breaks in cold weather

Visit our website http://mtworkerhealth.mt.gov for more information and updates!

If you have questions or comments, please contact:
Julia Brennan
Epidemiologist
jbrannan@mt.gov
(406) 444-1722