



A Division of SPG  
Insurance Solutions, LLC

# THE DISPATCH

MANAGING RISK IN THE MOVING & STORAGE INDUSTRY

## FROSTBITE AND HYPOTHERMIA FIRST AID



**With the winter now in full swing it is an important time to look at the two critical safety areas, frostbite and hypothermia. When detected and proper first aid is given, both are not critical situations. Without the proper first aid, amputation or death may result. Here are some basic first aid tips for both hypothermia and frostbite.**

### FROSTBITE

Often victims of frostbite are not aware that damage is being done. It is important to recognize the signs of frostbite:

- The skin turns red and is very cold to the touch.
- It then turns blotchy white, gray or yellow.
- Finally the skin becomes completely white and sometimes blisters.
- The body part will feel numb or very cold, in advanced stages there is no feeling at all in the exposed skin.

In treating frostbite keep the victim as warm and dry as possible and move indoors. Warm the frozen body part by placing it in warm (not hot) water. Check the water to make sure it remains warm. Do not move or rub the frozen part. Place the frostbitten part lower than the heart to increase blood flow. Do not let the person sit close to a stove, heater, or fire. If the frozen part gets too hot the damage can be worse. As the part begins to thaw have the victim slowly exercise the exposed area. Seek medical attention as soon as possible.

### HYPOTHERMIA

When your temperature drops a few degrees below normal hypothermia can set in. When frostbite occurs it is common to get hypothermia as well. The symptoms are:

- You begin to shiver uncontrollably.
- You become weak and disoriented, even unconscious.

Hypothermia is common after your body becomes hot or over worked. You may work hard in the morning then cool down and get too cold at rest.

To avoid hypothermia dress in layers and adjust what you are wearing to suit the temperature. Stay dry and wear clothes that wick moisture away from the body. Choose outer garments made of wind and waterproof materials.

If you have, or see someone have, the symptoms of hypothermia get inside as quickly as possible; remove any wet clothing; wrap them in a blanket and place in a warm area. If you cannot get them inside, you must at least protect them from the wind and weather. Seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Warn your employees that cold hands and feet can increase potential for dropping or slipping with boxes during the move process. To ensure proper body temperature wear clean and dry footwear and wear grip gloves in cold weather. These simple steps can avoid serious health risks and keep you working in a safe environment.

**If you should have any questions regarding hypothermia or frostbite please contact our claims department.**

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