

### Working in Extreme Winter Conditions

November 29, 2006

News Category: safety

Due to extreme weather conditions members have been scheduled to work mandatory overtime, working up to eleven hours a day for extended periods. Excessive exposure to cold is referred to as cold stress.

At very cold temperatures, the most serious concern is the risk of hypothermia or dangerous overcooling of the body. Another serious effect of cold exposure is frostbite or freezing of the exposed extremities such as fingers, toes, nose and ear lobes. Hypothermia could be fatal in absence of immediate medical attention.

The TWU reminds all members that the demands of the service or the importance of the job are never so great that we cannot do the job safely.

Members are reminded of the following precautions:

- \* Dress appropriately for the weather conditions.
- \* Working in extreme conditions and over lengthy periods of time may result in excessive fatigue.
- \* Use the Safe Return Monitoring System (formerly known as Man Check) when travelling to and from remote sites, or working alone in hazardous areas. The number to call is 1-888-596-2288.
- \* Watch for ice when getting out of vehicles and while carrying ladders and equipment.
- \* When working aloft, be aware that primary and secondary hydro lines may be sagging due to snow and ice. Be alert to downed hydro lines.
- \* Take extra precautions when working in the dark and alone.
- \* If members working alone encounter hazardous conditions they should request assistance, or if you feel the work cannot be done safely, the Canada Labour Code provides the right to refuse unsafe work.
- \* If you come across unsafe working conditions, members are required to report it to their manager.

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