



KEEP SAFE

A Monthly Publication for Texas Electric Cooperatives



December 2008



Winter work can be risky business!

Hypothermia, a condition in which the body loses heat faster than it can produce it, claims thousands of lives annually. When it strikes, its victims lose strength, suffer impaired judgment, make dangerous mistakes and overestimate how long they can withstand the cold. Symptoms include intense shivering, tense muscles, numbness, fatigue, slurred speech, stumbling, lethargy, erratic behavior and irritability. To treat it, reduce the body's heat loss by replacing wet, cold clothes with dry, warm ones and wrapping the victim in blankets.

Frostbite typically occurs when bare skin that's exposed to extreme cold, wind or cold objects freezes. First the affected body parts feel cold and stiff, then hard, and finally numb. It's the second most common winter danger for employees who work outside, in part because their work involves so much metal equipment, which conducts heat and pulls the warmth from your body if you touch it when it's cold. To treat frostbite, warm the affected area using skin-to-skin contact (without rubbing or massaging).

In either case, the first thing to do is get the victim indoors quickly and call for emergency help.

(Winter work continued on page 2)

Quiz - Can you work safely in the snow?

It's unavoidable. Even with the best planning, crews still need to work in winter. Do you know what to do if someone gets frostbite or hypothermia? Take our true/false quiz on winter job safety and test your preparedness. Answers are on page 2.

1. Hypothermia is easier to prevent than treat.
2. You should encourage hypothermia victims to move around to help warm them up.
3. Good physical condition is an important factor in avoiding both frostbite and hypothermia.
4. Hypothermia results from overexposure to cold air only.
5. To stay healthy in winter weather, you should eat plenty of proteins.
6. A warm drink will help stop the violent shivering of a hypothermia victim.
7. Winter clothing should be snug and tight fitting.
8. The quicker a frostbite victim begins treatment, the better the chance of saving the affected body part.
9. Avoiding frostbite and hypothermia while participating in winter sports is easy; simply follow the same precautions as you do when working outside.
10. Hypothermia can be fatal.
11. If you feel fatigued or numb when outside in cold weather, you should stay active but at the first sign of slurred speech or stumbling, get inside to warm up.
12. If you cannot get indoors to warm up, there is not much you can do to stay warm.
13. Never allow hypothermia victims to smoke or drink coffee or alcohol.
14. Wearing a hat is usually enough to keep body heat from escaping through your head, face and neck.
15. If you suspect someone has frostbite, you should get the person to shelter, and then call 911.
16. Gloves are better than mittens at preventing frostbite because they allow your fingers to move more freely.
17. To relieve swelling or pain caused by frostbite, raise the affected area above the level of the victim's chest.
18. Wool clothing helps you avoid hypothermia or frostbite.
19. To treat hypothermia, you must reduce the rate of heat loss from the victim's body.
20. Touching extremely cold metal with your bare hands does not contribute to hypothermia or frostbite.

(Quiz answers on page 2)

Decrease your cold-weather risks by:

✿ **Dressing appropriately.** Keep your head, face and neck as warm and dry as possible. Wear wool, which keeps you warm even when wet, a windproof/waterproof parka and rain chaps. Use mittens, rather than gloves, because your hands will stay warmer if your fingers are together. And don't touch metal with your bare hands.

✿ **Taking short breaks in heated areas.** If you're not busy, go inside and warm up, even if only for a few minutes. If you can't go inside, try isometric exercises such as slowly jogging in place, while moving your arms to increase circulation and prevent heat loss.

✿ **Staying healthy.** Poor nutrition, alcohol and drug use, not getting enough sleep — all these increase your risks in cold weather.

Source: Communications Construction

*Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year
From the Employees of
Texas Electric Cooperatives*



Scholarship application deadline is near...

The postmark deadline for the 2009 Loss Control Scholarship application is January 16th. Complete scholarship application and information can be located on Texas Electric Cooperatives website at www.texas-ec.org under Loss Control Program.

Answers to Quiz - Can you work safely in the snow?

1. T; 2. T; 3. T; 4. F; 5. T; 6. F; 7. F; 8. T; 9. T; 10. T; 11. F; 12. F; 13. T; 14. F; 15. T; 16. F; 17. T; 18. T; 19. T; 20. F

Loss Control Schools and Conference

Basic Pole Climbing School <i>Marshall January 6 - 9</i>	Transformer School <i>Fredericksburg January 6 - 9</i>	Regulator, Recloser, Capacitor School <i>Gonzales January 20 - 23</i>	Transformer School <i>Livingston February 3 - 6</i>
Regulator, Recloser, Capacitor School <i>Merkel February 17 - 20</i>	Transformer School <i>Tahoka March 3 - 6</i>	Troubleshooting School <i>Merkel March 10 - 13</i>	Underground School <i>Quitman March 16 - 20</i>
Advanced Pole Climbing <i>Gonzales March 17 - 20</i>	Loss Control Conference <i>San Antonio March 24 - 27</i>	Transformer School <i>Gilmer April 7 - 10</i>	Hotline 1 - 4 School <i>Levelland April 13 - 17</i>
	Basic Pole Climbing School <i>Gonzales April 21 - 24</i>	Hotline 1 - 4 School <i>Henderson April 27 - May 1</i>	