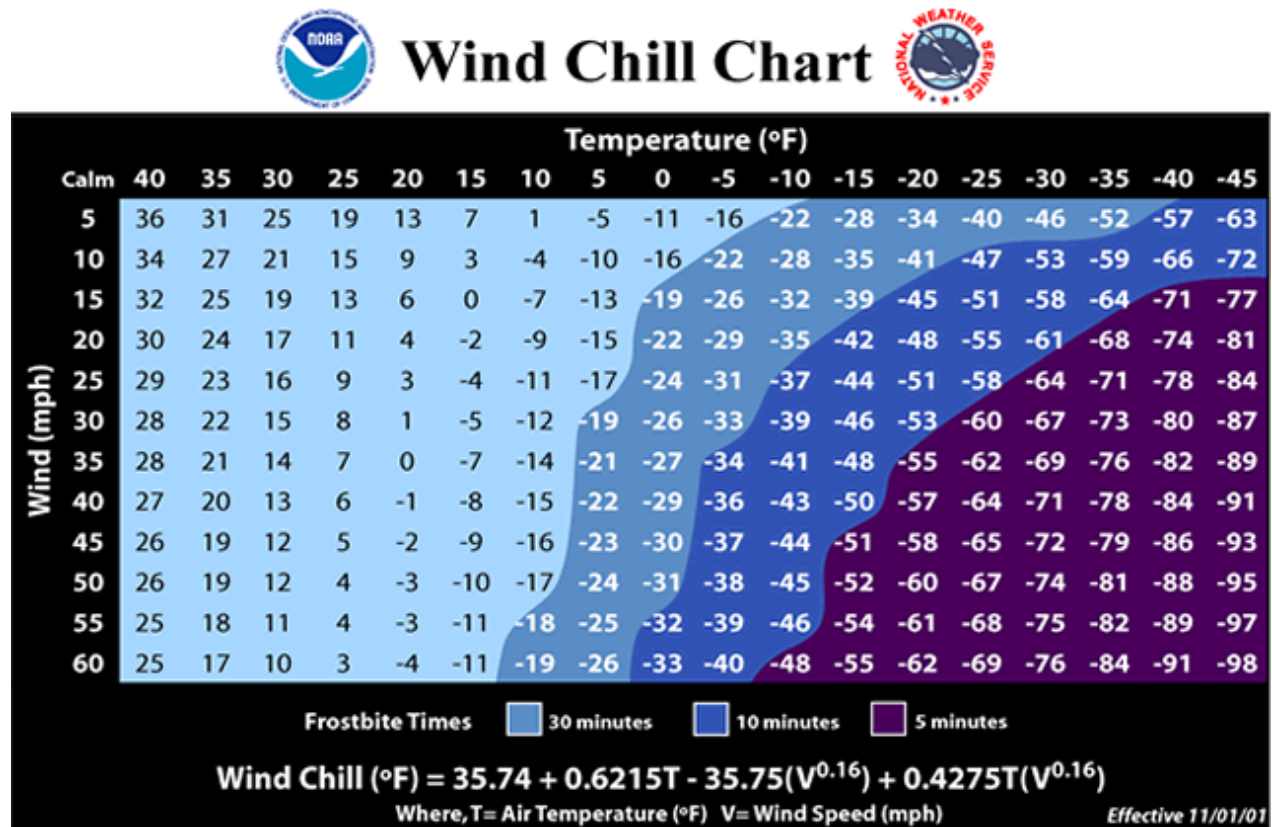


Knowledge is key to getting job done in cold weather

Bad weather and cold temperatures are fast approaching for the 2018 - 2019 winter season and much like your body can be stressed during the warm season, it can also be stressed during cold season. Cold stress can lead to injuries and illnesses such as frostbite and hypothermia.



Cold stress on the body is caused by both personal and environmental factors like air temperature, wind speed, presence of moisture, and contact with cold surfaces. In an effort to reduce the effects of cold stress on your body during the winter season, the following steps should be taken:

- Dress in layers using breathable garments that are not so tight to cut off circulation or impede movement. Layering clothing can help warm the cold air trapped between the layers. Breathable fabrics can help wick away the perspiration from the skin that worsens body heat loss;
- Wear a hat/hood combination and use liners under hard hats;
- Wear insulated, water-proof boots with traction soles;
- Wear insulated gloves that are water-resistant.

- Stay hydrated. Your body uses energy to keep its muscles warm and to move body fluids from its extremities to the core. This results in increased urine output which can result in dehydration. A dehydrated body is more susceptible to common colds and flu. Try to drink about as much water as you would during the summertime;
- Limit the amount of time exposed to cold temperatures;
- Suggest outside work occur during the warmest part of the day, around mid-afternoon.
- Request extra workers for more demanding jobs and suggest a buddy system to avoid potentially dangerous lone worker operations.
- Take periodic breaks in a warm location. Drink warm liquids. Avoid caffeine and alcohol which worsen dehydration.
- Use engineering controls such as radiant heaters, if possible.

Preventing cold stress will not only improve worker safety, but it can also improve productivity by reducing physical demands on the body. Be sure to take care of your body during the cold weather months and also be sure to check on fellow co-workers.

Need to report an unsafe situation or have a safety topic you would like to see featured on the Employee News Blog? Contact Kent County Safety Officer Brandon Olenik at 735-2200 or via email.

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