

HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER

Cold Weather Working

Cold weather can create new and, perhaps, unfamiliar hazards, so here are a few timely reminders:

- **Check and check again.** Supervisors should do additional checks every morning when there is snow or ice to make sure any additional hazards are removed or reduced. Ensure walkways are cleared and gritted. Keep workers informed of any additional requirements.
- **Wear the right clothing.** Low temperatures and wind chill can reduce manual dexterity and affect alertness, which can increase the risk of operating or working near plant and equipment. Keep an eye on the weather conditions and keep warm and aware. Outdoor tasks that require limited physical exertion may need additional protection (e.g. warm, windproof, waterproof, clothing) from the cold, wind and rain.
- **Wear suitable gloves.** Manually handling cold, wet materials, e.g. concrete blocks, can damage your palms and fingers. Materials with icy coatings, such as bricks, blocks, timber, and metal scaffold poles, can be more difficult to grip and may slip through your hands. Wearing suitable gloves that offer improved warmth and grip becomes even more important.
- **Be safe, be seen.** Wearing the correct – and most importantly, CLEAN – high visibility clothing becomes even more of a lifesaver during the darker, misty winter months. Be as visible as possible to reduce the risk of collision with plant and vehicles.
- **Make sure you can see.** Take extra care moving around site due to poorer light levels. Report any damaged or faulty lights, either around site or on plant and vehicles and get them repaired promptly. Keep lights clean to ensure they are effective.
- **Clear and grit / salt walkways.** Keep external staircases, walkways and footpaths clear of mud, ice and snow to reduce the chance of slips, trips and falls. Consider the need to grit paths as necessary. Carefully remove icicles or cordon off the area under the icicles until they've gone.
- **Look after your welfare.** Welfare facilities may be disrupted by frozen water and frozen water heaters. Protect water supplies and insulate water heaters overnight to protect them from freezing so they are ready for starting work on site. Ensure hot drinks are available.
- **Be careful with heat sources.** Portable heaters can be dangerous if not used properly. Ensure they are inspected and do not use if faulty. Site heaters on sturdy fire-resistant surfaces and protect hoses from damage and excessive heat. Keep combustible items (including clothing and paperwork) at least 10-15 feet away from heaters. Store gas cylinders upright and chained.
- **Maintain safety.** Whatever the weather, you should practice the usual methods for remaining safe on site.
- **Maintain quality.** Check minimum recommended temperatures for tasks such as concreting, tarmacking, laying bricks and blocks, etc to ensure that quality and safety are not compromised.



Eye Protection – Make It Task-Specific!



Many sites specify that glasses must be worn at all times. Regardless of the site rules, ensure you wear glasses/goggles that **will protect you from your work hazards**, even if that means changing them between tasks. See Risk Assessments and Method Statements covering your work for specifics, but as a rule:

- If there are particles, flying objects, or dust: wear safety glasses with side protection (side shields) as a minimum
- If working with chemicals: wear goggles to protect against splashes
- If working near hazardous radiation (welding, lasers, or fibre optics): use special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shields, or helmets designed for that task

If you have any special requirements, or issues with wearing an item of PPE, tell your Supervisor or Head Office.