

# ST. MORITZ SAFE

## Monthly Safety Blast

### WORKING SAFELY IN COLD ENVIRONMENTS

#### FROSTBITE

The most common cold-induced injury, it usually affects the fingers, hands, toes, feet, ears and nose.

##### Superficial Frostbite:

Characterized by white, waxy, or grayish-yellow patches on the affected areas. The skin feels cold and numb and is stiff on the surface, but underlying tissues feels soft and pliable when depressed.

Seek medical attention as soon as possible. If you are more than one hour from a medical facility and have warm water, place the frostbitten part in the water. Make sure that the water is warm, not hot. Rewarm affected part for 20 to 40 minutes, until the tissues soften.

##### **Treatment:**

Treat superficial frostbite by moving the victim to a warm, dry area.

- Remove any constrictive clothing items that could impair circulation.
- Place dry, sterile gauze between toes and fingers to absorb moisture and to keep them from sticking together
- Slightly elevate the affected part.

##### Deep Frostbite:

Usually affects the feet or hands and is characterized by waxy, pale, solid skin. Blisters may appear. Treat deep frostbite by moving the victim indoors and immediately seeking medical attention. Never re-warm a frostbitten body part by rubbing, exposing to open fire, rubbing with snow or cold water soaks. Never allow a re-warmed body part to re-freeze.

#### HYPOTHERMIA

Occurs when the body's temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit or 35 degrees Celsius.

##### Symptoms of Hypothermia

Symptoms of hypothermia include a change in mental status, uncontrollable shivering, cool abdomen and a low core temperature. Severe hypothermia may produce rigid muscles, dark and puffy skin, irregular heart and respiratory rates and unconsciousness.

##### **Treatment:**

Treat hypothermia by protecting the victim from further heat loss and calling for immediate medical attention.

- Move the victim out of the cold
- Replace wet clothing with dry clothing
- Add insulation, such as blankets, pillows, towels or newspapers beneath and around the victim, including victim's head
- If alert, provide a warm, sweet drink - avoid caffeine or alcohol
- Handle the victim gently and place in a horizontal (flat) position
- Give artificial respiration or CPR (if you are trained) as needed

#### DEHYDRATION

Occurs when the body does not have as much water and fluids as it needs to perform its normal functions.

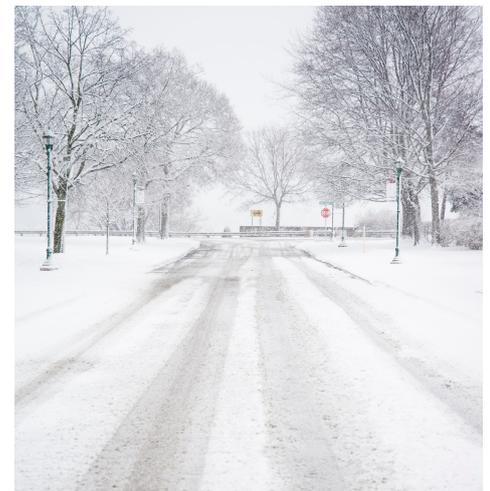
##### Symptoms of Dehydration

Dehydration is caused by losing too much fluid, not drinking enough water, fluids or a combination of both. In cold environments, thirst is often suppressed and dehydration occurs when fluid intake is reduced.

Some symptoms of mild dehydration include weakness, dizziness, fatigue and dry mouth.

##### **Treatment:**

Treat dehydration by providing the victim with a warm, sweet drink - avoid caffeine or alcohol. In severe cases, seek medical attention.



#### PREVENTION

The following are some guidelines to help combat cold-induced hazards.

- Know the signs and symptoms of cold induced injuries and illnesses
- Be aware of proper treatment methods
- Layer clothing to accommodate for changes in weather
- Drink warm, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free liquids to maintain fluid levels and preserve body heat
- Use the buddy system - work in pairs to ensure each other's safety
- Seek shelter at regular intervals to rest and warm up