Frostbite and Hypothermia

BE PREPARED FOR COLD WEATHER
Keep moving to keep warm

WHAT IS FROSTBITE/HYPOThERMIA

- Frostbite is freezing of exposed body parts such as the fingers, toes, nose, or earlobes.
- The affected area is cold to touch, may appear cherry-red, mottled, very pale, or even white.
- The skin may have a feeling of numbness, “pins & needles,” or is very painful especially when re-warming.
- Hypothermia occurs when the body temperature cools to a life-threatening level and sometimes accompanies frostbite injury.

THE FACTS (CDC 2013)

- Hypothermia is a medical emergency.
- In the U.S., an average of 1,300 deaths per year is associated with cold exposure.
- 67% of hypothermia-related deaths were men.
- Alcohol and drug use increases the chances of suffering a frostbite injury and/or hypothermia.
- Those who suffer from diabetes, heart conditions, as well as infants and the elderly, are at greater risk of sustaining hypothermia in cold weather.
- Signs of hypothermia include slurred speech, shivering, weakness, confusion, drowsiness and/or loss of consciousness.

TIPS FOR PREVENTION

- Pay attention to weather forecasts.
- Dress in several layers of loose warm clothing.
- Wear hats that fully cover the ears, warm boots, & mittens.
- Drink plenty of warm fluids but avoid alcohol & caffeine.
- Avoid or limit outdoor activities when the temperature nears or dips below 5°F (-15°C). (CDC 2013).
- Take frequent breaks indoors from the cold.

If you have ideas for the Stall Street Journal, contact: coesafety@engr.wisc.edu