

COLD WEATHER INFORMATION

For

UBCP/ACTRA PERFORMERS

IT'S COLD! Cold snaps like we are having can be a serious health and safety concern. Freezing conditions can cause slipping injuries, frozen skin and hypothermia, all of which are to be taken very seriously.

UBCP/ACTRA is alerting members to be fully prepared to manage the risks associated with working outside in below zero temperatures. Here are some things to keep in mind:

Keeping warm can be a challenge when you have to be in costume, so come to set prepared with appropriate base-layer clothing, wool socks, 'hot-shots', warm, sturdy footwear and a warm, water/wind proof winter coat that you can put on between takes or on breaks. Hats, mitts, water-bottles and a thermos for continuous warm drinks can also help.

Know your rights and responsibilities as a worker in BC.

Understand the signs and symptoms of cold stress and report it immediately if it happens to you or others.

Productions are not obliged to provide workers with base layers, 'cozy coats' or hand warmers. Thankfully, many productions do provide these things but they do not have to.

Below are the provisions in the BCMPPA which outline the employer responsibilities:

A2001 Dressing Room and Sanitary Provisions

(b) The Producer shall, where possible, provide for the exclusive use of Performers, clean and comfortable facilities (such as dressing rooms in studios and either trailers or motor homes on location) with reasonable temperature and adequate amount of space.

D410 Inclement Weather

No Background Performer will be required to be exposed to inclemency or extremes of weather for unreasonably long periods of time. During intemperate or inclement weather, Background Performers will be allowed a rest period of not less than ten (10) minutes per hour, when they will be able to seek shelter from the elements, provided that completion of the shot shall not be considered a breach of this Article.

Remember your Rights & Responsibilities as a worker in BC:

Your rights

- Right to a healthy and safe workplace
- Right to refuse unsafe work – you can refuse to work if conditions get too cold and it is unsafe!

If you have reasonable cause to believe that performing a job or task puts you or someone else at risk, you must not perform the job or task. You must immediately notify your supervisor or employer (Background Coordinator, AD, Stunt Coordinator or a Production Manager), who will then take the appropriate steps to determine if the work is unsafe and remedy the situation.

Your responsibilities

- Be alert to hazards. Currently, this could be cold working environments, ice/slippery areas or experiencing the early signs of 'cold stress'. Report them immediately to your supervisor or employer.
- Get treatment quickly should an injury occur and tell the health care provider that the injury is work-related. Always report to the on-set First Aid Attendant if you are injured or feel unwell while at work.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS of COLD STRESS & HYPOTHERMIA

Cold stress

Four factors contribute to cold stress: cold temperatures, high or cold wind, dampness and cold water.

A cold environment forces the body to work harder to maintain its core temperature of 98.6°F/37°C.

Cold air, water, and snow all draw heat from the body. So, while it is obvious that below freezing conditions combined with inadequate clothing could bring about cold stress, it can also happen at 50°F/10°C coupled with rain and/or wind. Severe cold stress can lead to hypothermia.

How your body reacts to cold conditions

When in a cold environment, most of your body's energy is used to keep your internal temperature warm. Over time, your body will begin to shift blood flow from your extremities (hands, feet, arms, and legs) and outer skin to the core (chest and abdomen). This allows exposed skin and the extremities to cool rapidly and increases the risk of frostbite. When the body can no longer maintain core temperature by constricting blood vessels, it shivers to increase heat production. Maximum severe shivering develops when the body temperature has fallen to 95°F/35°C. Hypothermia becomes an issue at this point.

Reducing the risks of hypothermia

Hypothermia means "low heat" and is a potentially serious health condition. It occurs when body heat is lost from being in a cold environment faster than it can be replaced. Symptoms begin with shivering. As the body temperature continues to fall, slurred speech, lack of coordination and memory loss develop and shivering ceases. Once the body temperature falls to around 85°F/30°C, the person may become unconscious, and at 78°F/26°C, the person could die. The basic principle for preventing hypothermia is to stay warm and dry.

Guidelines that work:

Wear warm head covering. Much of the body's heat is lost through the head.

Wear layered clothing. Layers allow warm air to stay trapped but do not trap perspiration next to the skin.

1) The 1st layer of clothing should allow the skin to breathe by allowing sweat to escape. Underwear, socks, and glove liners made of polypropylene or knitted silk allow sweat to escape from next to the skin.

2) The second layer of insulating clothing should be one that absorbs perspiration but does not allow heat to escape. Wool is an ideal fabric because it will stay warm even when wet.

3) The third layer of clothing should also trap body heat as well as keep water or dampness out. Quilted coats filled with down or one of the new lightweight micro-fibres that trap heat are ideal, provided they are waterproof.

Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids. Doing this will help prevent dehydration and exhaustion, which can lead to hypothermia. Heated drinks can be helpful, but limit your intake of coffee & tea.

Pace yourself during vigorous activity. Take regular breaks to get away from the cold environment.

Work rested – fatigue is a risk factor in the cold.

For more information:

WorkSafeBC - [Cold Stress](#)

WorkSafeBC - [Worker Rights & Responsibilities](#)