

October 2005 Safety Meeting

Winter Preparedness

Working in winter conditions is not a major concern to propane workers in Alabama, but winter, even in the south, can bring with it special challenges. Now is a good time to review some of the following issues to help make your winter work experience as productive and safe as possible. Remember, some of you might be traveling north during the holiday season so this cold weather safety meeting could be very helpful. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) suggest the following strategies to protect your health and safety when the temperature plummets and related poor weather appears:

Dress Warmly

- Wear a hat, remember at least 60% of your body warmth is lost through your head.
- Wear multiple layers of clothing. Peel off the layers as the day warms.
- Wear water-resistant coats and footwear. Staying dry in the winter is probably the most important thing you can do.
- Wear gloves that protect from the cold and other hand-related injuries. CAUTION: If transferring propane, only wear gloves that are designed to protect you from propane freeze burns.

Hard Work

Be careful when performing extremely hard work in the cold. Remember your body is already working extra hard keeping itself warm. Increased respiration of cold temperature air can tax the body. Another problem that happens occasionally is that workers become overheated because of all the extra clothing.

Drink Water

Your body needs water even when it's cold outside. Force yourself to drink water occasionally even if you're not thirsty. Remember dry air robs your body of precious moisture.

Wind Chill

Wind will carry away precious body heat very quickly. When working in windy conditions protect your body from losing body heat.

Be Cautious About Traveling

Listen for radio or television reports of travel advisories issued by the National Weather Service.

Make sure your vehicle is prepared for winter. Check antifreeze, tire pressure and the general condition of your vehicle including the battery and connections.

If you must travel in inclement weather, let someone know your destination and when you expect to arrive. Ask them to notify authorities if you are late.

Check and restock the winter emergency supplies in your vehicle before you leave.

Never pour water on your windshield to remove ice or snow; this can shatter the glass.

Don't rely on the vehicle to provide sufficient heat; always have extra clothing or blankets on hand in case the vehicle breaks down.

What to Do if You Get Stranded

Staying in your vehicle when stranded is often the safest choice if winter storms create poor visibility or if roadways are ice-covered. These steps will increase your safety when stranded:

Stay in the vehicle. Do not leave to search for assistance unless help is visible within 100 yards. It's very easy to become disoriented or lost in blowing and drifting snow.

Display a trouble sign. Tie a brightly colored cloth on the radio antenna and, if the engine is already cold, raise the hood.

Move anything you need from the trunk into the passenger area.

Wrap your entire body, including your head, in whatever is handy to help maintain body heat. Use extra clothing, blankets, maps, newspapers, or even removable car mats for added insulation.

Stay awake. You will be less vulnerable to cold-related health problems.

Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow – this will reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Run the motor (and heater) for about 10 minutes per hour, opening one downwind window slightly to let in air. Also, turn on the car's dome light while the car is running.

Do minor exercises. As you sit, clap your hands and move your arms and legs occasionally to improve your circulation and stay warmer. Try not to stay in one position for too long. Avoid overexertion.

If more than one person is in the car, huddle together for warmth. If you must sleep, take turns.

Do not eat snow because it will lower your body temperature.

Winter Storm Watches and Warnings

A *winter storm watch* indicates that severe winter weather may affect your area. A *winter storm warning* indicates that severe winter weather conditions are definitely on the way. A *blizzard warning* means that large amounts of falling or blowing snow and sustained winds of at least 35 miles per hour are expected for several hours. For ongoing information about winter storms in your area, check out the FEMA Winter Storm Update Center online at: <http://www.fema.gov/fema/wsuc.htm>.

When winter temperatures drop significantly below normal, staying warm and safe can be a challenge. Although staying indoors as much as possible can help reduce your risk (especially for injuries from car crashes and falls on the ice) it's probably not reasonable to expect to stay indoors whenever the temperature becomes dangerous. When you do go out, being prepared and following sensible health and safety precautions can make the difference between risking a dangerous excursion and experiencing a safe – if snowy – adventure.

In conclusion, winter weather can have a negative effect on employees even in the deep south. We all have witnessed how weather patterns have changed over the past several years so having snow and ice even in Alabama is not that unusual. Take care of yourself and family and remember your preparation for winter's onslaught could make the difference between life and death! And one last thing, if you are traveling north for the holidays, force yourself to think about keeping warm even if it's 75 degrees and sunny when you leave Alabama. And lastly, keep a fully charged cell phone with you at all times.

October 2005 Test

Winter Preparedness

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Read and answer each of the following questions. When complete, grade the test and review incorrect answers so each employee is “armed” with the correct answers before they leave the training.

1. According to this safety meeting, what percentage of body heat is lost through the top of the head?
 - a. 10
 - b. 30
 - c. 50
 - d. 60

2. To keep warm, drivers should wear only brown cotton gloves while transferring propane.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. A blizzard warning is issued when wind is carrying blowing snow at:
 - a. 10 mph
 - b. 35 mph
 - c. 40 mph
 - d. 55 mph

4. Employees should refrain from drinking water on cold days.
 - a. True
 - b. False

5. According to this meeting, wearing multiple layers of clothing is preferred over a large, single garment.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. If your vehicle breaks down, it is usually preferable to stay with your vehicle and await help.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. If you are stranded alongside the roadway on a cold day—do which of the following:
 - a. Make sure your exhaust pipe is free of snow and other debris
 - b. Put up a sign, raise the engine hood or place a bright cloth on the radio antenna to attract attention.
 - c. Run the engine every 10 minutes or so to heat the interior.
 - d. All of the above.

October 2005 Answer Sheet

1. d
2. b
3. b
4. b
5. a
6. a
7. d