

Working in dark, wet, cold and icy working conditions is inevitable for construction workers during the winter. However, there are certain best practice measures that can be followed to minimise risk and comply with the latest health and safety standards . As temperatures drop and daylight hours shorten, it's important to take extra precautions to keep everyone safe.

Here are key tips for winter working:

Stay Warm and Dry

- Wear layered clothing to trap heat.
- Waterproof jackets, gloves, and boots help prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Inspect PPE to ensure is suitability.
- Ensure suitable and warm welfare facilities are available.
- Consider delaying the work until warmer times of the year without compromising on safety

Manage Slips, Trips, and Falls

- Keep walkways, stairs, and work areas clear of ice and snow with suitable lighting.
- Use salt or grit where necessary.
- Wear slip-resistant footwear.

Safe Driving in Winter Conditions

- Check vehicles before use (tyres, lights, windscreen wipers).
- Allow extra stopping distance on icy roads.
- Avoid rushing—plan extra time for journeys.



Worksite Safety

- Ensure adequate lighting during shorter days.
- Take regular breaks in warm areas if working outdoors.
- Be aware of cold-related illnesses (hypothermia, frostbite, cold stress).

Emergency Preparedness

- Keep first aid kits and emergency contact numbers accessible.
- Train staff to recognize and respond to cold-related emergencies.
- Planning ahead and taking precautions can prevent accidents and keep everyone safe during the winter months.



Equipment & Machinery Safety

- Cold weather can affect machinery performance—check engines, hydraulics, and electrical systems before use.
- Avoid using equipment with slippery gloves—use anti-slip grips if possible
- Ensure tools are stored properly to prevent freezing or damage.

Health & Wellbeing

- Keep hydrated—cold weather can reduce your sense of thirst, but dehydration is still a risk.
- Maintain a balanced diet to help generate body heat.
- Be aware of seasonal affective disorder (SAD) or low mood caused by limited daylight.

Outdoor Work Planning

- Monitor weather forecasts and plan work around severe conditions.
- Rotate tasks among team members to reduce prolonged exposure to the cold.
- Set up windbreaks or shelters for long-duration outdoor work.

Chemical & Material Safety

- Some chemicals or fuels may behave differently in freezing temperatures—check storage and handling guidelines.
- Anti-freeze, de-icing agents, and salt should be stored safely to avoid spills or accidents.

Emergency Communication

- Ensure mobile phones or radios are fully charged—cold drains batteries faster.
- Have a check-in system for remote workers or lone workers.

Mental Alertness

- Cold weather and reduced daylight can impair concentration—schedule breaks and encourage alertness checks.
- Encourage team members to report fatigue or signs of reduced attention.

Winter brings shorter days, icy surfaces, and freezing temperatures—making safety more important than ever. Stay warm, stay visible, and watch your step. Check your equipment, plan for bad weather, and don't underestimate the cold. A little preparation goes a long way in keeping everyone safe this season! By addressing both physical and mental risks, and combining practical preparation with vigilance, employers and workers can significantly reduce accidents and maintain safety throughout the winter month.