

# Cold Temperatures

**Affected Sectors: Fishing, Construction, Warehousing (Cold Storage), Food Processing, Manufacturing, Retail**

Cold exposure is a contributing hazard to musculoskeletal injury. Cold exposure causes arteries to narrow which reduces muscle and soft tissue flexibility and efficiency.



## Hazards

## Contributing Factors

### Force

- Muscles are less flexible and efficient when cold, making objects seem heavier than what they are.
- Gloves for warmth may hinder grip when performing manual tasks.

### Posture

- Limited range of motion due to reduced flexibility.
- Limited range of motion if layering clothing.

**TIP:** If you need to work in cold temperatures, take frequent breaks and stretch affected body parts to reduce stiffness and muscle fatigue.

## Possible Controls

### Quick Wins

- Provide your body time to warm up through stretching.
- Begin with lighter tasks.
- Wear extra layers of clothes (being aware that range of motion may be limited as well as grip).
- Provide access to heaters, hot drinks, and warmer areas (i.e. vehicles, shelters to block wind)
- Ensure PPE is insulated.

### Long-Term Planning

- Remove exposure to cold elements through workplace design.
- Provide more mechanical options to replace physical demands.
- Rotate jobs out of cold environments.