



First Aid for Hypothermia

Learn what to do when an individual is suffering from hypothermia.

How to Address Workplace Odors

Learn how to address concerns when a workplace odor impacts your performance or health.



A monthly safety newsletter from

First Aid for Hypothermia

When a person is exposed to the cold in dry or wet conditions, hypothermia can occur. Specifically, hypothermia is when a person's body fails to compensate for dramatic heat loss and his or her core temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. When this happens, if the victim is not immediately removed from the elements, hypothermia can be deadly.

As such, it's important to know what steps to take in the event that you suspect a co-worker is experiencing the symptoms of hypothermia—shivering, dizziness, hunger, fast breathing and fatigue.

For hypothermia that occurs in dry conditions:

- Call for emergency assistance as soon as possible.
- Move the person to a warm, dry area and do not leave him or her alone.
- Wrap the person in blankets.
- Have the person drink warm, sweet drinks (sugar water or a sports drink) if he or she is alert. Do not administer drinks with caffeine or alcohol.

- Have the person move his or her arms and legs to create muscle heat. If they are unable to do this, place warm bottles or hot packs in the armpits, groin, neck and head areas.

For hypothermia that occurs in wet conditions:

- Call for emergency assistance immediately. Body heat is lost up to 25 times faster in wet conditions.
- Get the person out of the water as soon as possible or have him or her climb on a floating item. The victim should not attempt to swim unless another person or object can be reached easily. Swimming or other physical activity uses up necessary body heat and reduces overall survival time by approximately 50 percent.
- **Do not** remove any clothing. Instead, button, buckle and zip any collars, cuffs, shoes or hoods. This is because the layer of trapped water closest to the body provides insulation that slows the loss of heat.

For more winter safety tips, contact Baldwin Krystyn Sherman Partners today.

In frigid, wet or dry conditions, it only takes approximately 20 to 30 minutes for hypothermia to set in.



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How to Address Workplace Odors

Odors from shampoos, air fresheners and cleaners are common in the workplace. However, these cosmetic and chemical fragrances can sometimes negatively affect employees and cause mild to serious health symptoms, including headaches, nausea, numbness, skin irritation and fatigue.

These adverse reactions are typically the result of allergies or asthma. Most commonly, the odors causing the irritation can be traced back to a co-worker's soap, deodorant or other fragrance.

Workplace factors that impact an employee's performance or health are a serious matter that a supervisor can help you address. Specifically, when it comes to communicating the issue to a co-worker, leadership and human resources can provide you a means to do the following:

- Address your concerns plainly, highlighting how the odor in question is impacting your well-being. Be specific when initially describing your symptoms, detailing any attempts you have made to relieve them.
- Speak with your co-worker if you feel uncomfortable or if the co-worker ignores your initial request.
- File a workplace complaint and see a doctor immediately if you are experiencing severe symptoms like confusion or anxiety.

To further address workplace concerns over odors, ask your manager if they have an odor-free policy in place. Successful policies should do the following:

1. Address detrimental odors in a more general way and account for fragrances associated with the workplace, like disinfectants or other industrial products.
2. Reinforce the fact that an odor-free policy is in place for medical reasons and is not simply because an employee doesn't like a certain smell.
3. Get reviewed annually to address any new concerns that have arisen.

In some cases, federal and state human-rights legislation around environmental sensitivities exist, and employers are required to address any employee concerns in a timely and appropriate manner.



Safety in NUMBERS 12³



The normal human body temperature is 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit.

Hypothermia occurs when the body's temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit.

Source: Mayo Clinic

Real-life Case Study

Since beginning his new job at an Atlanta-based advertising agency, David has been getting headaches more frequently. He noticed that the pain would persist throughout the workday even after taking pain medication, but would then subside when he was at home.

After speaking with his doctor, David determined that his headaches were likely the result of a workplace odor. Upon further investigation, David found that the cleaner that was being used by the night cleaning staff to disinfect his desk was the cause.

David set up a meeting with his manager to discuss his concerns, and his manager later notified the cleaning staff. Since then, the cleaning staff has begun using a natural cleaner that doesn't have a pronounced odor.

In addition, the advertising agency—after referencing applicable state regulations—is now considering implementing an odor-free policy to address the larger concerns of the workplace.