

## WINTER REMINDERS TO KEEP YOUR EMPLOYEES SAFE



Although OSHA does not have a specific standard that covers working in cold environments, employers have a responsibility to provide workers with employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards. This would include cold stress, which could cause death or serious physical harm to them ([Section 5 \(a\)\(1\) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970](#)). Employers should, therefore, train workers on the hazards of the job and safety measures to use, such as engineering controls and safe work practices, that will protect workers' safety and health.

**Employers should train workers** on how to prevent and recognize cold stress illnesses and injuries and how to apply first aid treatment. Workers should be trained on the appropriate engineering controls, personal protective equipment and work practices to reduce the risk of cold stress.

**Employers should provide engineering controls.** For example, radiant heaters may be used to warm workers in outdoor security stations. If possible, shield work areas from drafts or wind to reduce wind chill.

**Employers should use safe work practices.** For example, it is easy to become dehydrated in cold weather. Employers therefore, can provide warm sweetened liquids to workers avoiding caffeinated and alcoholic drinks. If possible, employers could schedule heavy work during the warmer part of the day, and assign workers to tasks in pairs (buddy system), so that they can monitor each other for signs of cold stress. Workers should be allowed to interrupt their work, if they are extremely uncomfortable and given frequent breaks in warm areas when conditions warrant. Acclimatize new workers and those returning after time away from work, by gradually increasing their workload, and allowing more frequent breaks in warm areas, as they build up a tolerance for working in the cold environment. Safety measures, such as these, should be incorporated into the relevant health and safety plan for the workplace.

**Dressing properly** is extremely important in preventing cold stress. The type of fabric worn does make a difference. Cotton loses its insulation value when it becomes wet. Wool, silk and most synthetics, on the other hand, retain their insulating abilities even when wet. The following are recommendations for working in cold environments:

- Wear at least three layers of loose fitting clothing. Layering provides better insulation and layers can be removed as needed. Do not wear tight fitting clothing.
- An inner layer of wool, silk or synthetic to keep moisture away from the body.
- A middle layer of wool or synthetic to provide insulation even when wet.
- An outer wind and rain protective layer that allows some ventilation to prevent overheating.

- Wear a hat or hood to help keep your whole body warmer. Hats reduce the amount of body heat that escapes from your head.
- Use a knit mask to cover the face and mouth (if needed).
- Use insulated gloves to protect the hands (water resistant if necessary).
- Wear insulated and waterproof boots (or other footwear).

### Be Aware of the signs of cold stress...

**Hypothermia-** One of the biggest dangers from working in the cold can be the hardest to detect and happens when your body temperature drops below 95° F. Mild hypothermia can make you feel confused, and you may not think anything is wrong until it is too late. Being too cold can also cloud your judgment and cause you to make mistakes while you work, and mistakes can sometimes be deadly.

Early symptoms of hypothermia include shivering, feeling tired, being clumsy, and being confused. As your body loses more heat, the shivering may stop, your skin may turn blue, the pupils of your eye may expand, your pulse and breathing may slow, and you may pass out.

**Frostbite-** Many parts of the body are prone to frostbite including your fingers, toes, nose, and ears. Frostbite happens when a part of the body freezes. Warning signs include numbness or tingling, stinging, or pain where you are most exposed to the cold.

**Other Cold Weather Injuries include-** trench foot is a condition when your feet are wet and cold for too long causing your feet to lose heat, and this can slow the blood flow and damage tissue. Trench foot can happen when it is as warm as 60° F as can Chilblains which can cause itching, red patches, swelling and blistering on extremities, such as on your toes, fingers, ears and nose. For more information on cold weather injuries visit the Center for Disease web address: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/workingincold/>



## Overview of Body Armor & Law Enforcement

Firearms are one of the most dangerous threats faced by law enforcement officers in the United States. During the past three decades, ballistic-resistant soft body armor has saved the lives of thousands of police officers. Since 1999, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) program, created by the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 1998, is a unique U.S. Dept. of Justice initiative designed to provide a critical resource to state and local law enforcement.

Since 1999, the BVP program has reimbursed more than 13,000 jurisdictions, a total of \$375 million in federal funds for the purchase of over one million vests (1,146,909 as of December, 2013). Based on data collected and recorded by Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) staff, in FY 2012, protective vests were directly attributable to saving the lives of at least 33 law enforcement and corrections officers, in 20 different states, an increase 13.7% over FY 2011. At least 14 of those life-saving vests had been purchased, in part, with BVP funds.

Following two years of declining law enforcement officer line-of-duty deaths, the country realized a dramatic 37 percent increase in officer deaths in 2010. Fifty-nine of the 160 officers killed in 2010 were shot during violent encounters; a 20 percent increase over 2009 numbers. Due to the increase in the number of law enforcement officer deaths, coupled with renewed efforts to improve officer safety, beginning with FY 2011, in order to receive BVP funds, jurisdictions must certify, during the application process, that all law enforcement agencies benefitting from the BVP Program have a written "mandatory wear" policy in effect.

### Employer Responsibility

The Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act provides workers the right to a safe and healthful workplace. Section 5(a)(1) of the OSH Act states: "Each employer shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his/her employees." A safe and healthful workplace means that hazards are removed and workers are trained. If a hazard cannot be removed completely, protection (for example, personal protective equipment such as body armor) must be provided.

### Risk Assessment

The OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Standard 29CFR1910.132(d)(1) requires the Employer to "assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present, or are likely to be present, which necessitate the use of personal protective equipment

(PPE)". OSHA Standard 29CFR1910.132(d)(1)(i) then goes on to require: "... If such hazards are present, or likely to be present, the employer shall: Select, and have each affected employee use, the types of PPE that will protect the affected employee from the hazards identified in the hazard assessment".

Body armor is considered to be Personal Protective Equipment and is designed to prevent serious injury and death. It does not make the wearer invulnerable to attack. It is designed to provide protection against unexpected threats. It complements other PPE and officer training techniques in place and should not alter this approach.

Based on the prevalence of unknown threats law enforcement officers are exposed to on a daily basis, and the fact that there is a "mandatory use policy" in effect for Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant vests received, it is not unreasonable to require all law enforcement officers, and police community support officers to wear body armor.

### Employee Responsibility

Section 5(b) of the OSH Act states: "Each employee shall comply with occupational safety and health standards and all rules, regulations, and orders issued pursuant to this Act which are applicable to his/her own actions and conduct". This would include supervisory officers observing their duty of care and ensuring that staff wear their body armor in accordance with the training/instructions provided for its use and the mandatory use policy.

### Body Armor, the Final Word

Police use of body armor has been a source of contention, for a variety of reasons. But officer safety cannot be taken too lightly, especially for the families of the officers. Body armor not only can reduce the severity of a firearm-related incident, it can protect officers in car accidents and in knife attacks. Families of law enforcement personnel expect their love ones to come home from work *every* day.

No chief wants to be put in a position of having to present a folded flag to a loved one of a police officer when there was something that could have been done to prevent a death.



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## CONN-OSHA and OSHA Expands Recordkeeping Requirements

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's updated recordkeeping rule includes two key changes.

**First**, the rule expands the list of severe work-related injuries and illnesses that employers **must report** to OSHA. The revised rule retains the current requirement to report all fatalities within 8 hours and adds the requirement to report all inpatient hospitalizations, amputations and loss of an eye within 24 hours.

**Second**, the rule updates the list of industries that are exempt from the requirement to routinely keep OSHA injury and illness records due to relatively low occupational injury and illness rates.

As a Public Sector Only State Plan State, CONN-OSHA must adopt standards that are equal to or more stringent than OSHA's rule. Therefore, **CONN-OSHA will adopt the requirement that employers report fatalities within 8 hours and report all inpatient hospitalizations, amputations and loss of an eye within 24 hours.**

CONN-OSHA will NOT adopt the list of industries that are exempt from the recordkeeping requirements and there are no exemptions for public sector employers. These new reporting requirements will take effect on **January 1, 2015** for both the private and public sectors.

Private sector establishments in Connecticut should refer to the new list of industries that are exempt from recordkeeping requirements. The list can be found on the OSHA website,

[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). Remember Public sector establishments are not exempt from recordkeeping requirements.

**Remember, as of January 1, 2015, all employers, Public and Private sector must report:**

- Work-related fatalities - within 8 hours
- Work-related inpatient hospitalizations – within 24 hours
- Work-related Amputations – within 24 hours
- Work-related Loss of an eye – within 24 hours

**Reporting can be accomplished as follows:**

### Public Sector Establishments

CONN-OSHA at: (860) 263-6946 or 1-866-241-4060

### Private Sector Establishments

OSHA's free and confidential number at 1-800-321-6742 or OSHA Area Office during normal business hours

- [Hartford Area Office](http://www.osha-slc.com) 860-240-3152
- [Bridgeport Area Office](http://www.osha-slc.com) 203-579-5581

Private sector establishments will also be able to use a new online form that will soon be available. CONN-OSHA will not offer on line reporting.

Call CONN-OSHA at 860-263-6900 with any questions regarding the new Recordkeeping Rule. Our website is: [www.commosha.com](http://www.commosha.com)

## Section 31-396 to 31-402 Connecticut General Statutes Occupational Health Clinics Grant

The Commissioners of Labor and Public Health wanted to encourage the development of Occupational Health Clinics by making grants-in-aid available to public and nonprofit organizations. These funds would be used to facilitate the development and operation of occupational clinics and to support activities involved in the evaluation, treatment, and prevention of occupational diseases and injuries.

For an organization to qualify as an Occupational Health Clinic, it must meet certain criteria. Examples of required criteria would include an affiliation with the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics, maintaining Industrial Hygiene related services and maintaining the ability to train physicians in the recognition and treatment of occupationally related injuries and illnesses.

Auxiliary occupational health clinics are general hospitals and/or other medical facilities, which operate corporate medicine programs and/or employee wellness programs.

The funds that are allocated to the Occupational Health Clinics and the Auxiliary Health Clinics provide valuable information and services that are used to promote safety and health in the industrial and construction environment.

For further information on this program please visit <http://www.connosha.com> and click on Occupational Health Grant.

## Fatality & Casualty Reporting

**State & Town:** CONN-OSHA (860) 263-6946 (local) or 1-866-241-4060 (toll-free)  
**Private Employers:** Report to Federal OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA(6742)

## Hazard Corner....

Last winter, a municipal public works mechanic was seriously injured when a 32,000 pound dump truck rolled off of the trailer lift he was using to install a tire chain. The truck pinned him against the garage door, fracturing his ribs and puncturing his lungs. If the tire chain instructions had been followed, the truck tire would have never been off of the ground.

**Tire Chains** Follow the manufacturer's instructions for installing chains on tires.

**PORTABLE JACKS** A common practice for installing a plow blade on snow trucks is to lift them with portable jacks. Be sure all portable jacks are thoroughly inspected at least twice a year for wear and defects. Mark the load capacity on the jack if it is no longer legible.

**HOISTING SLINGS** [alloy steel chain, wire rope, metal mesh, natural or synthetic fiber rope] Each day before use slings and fasteners must be inspected for defects or damage. A documented thorough inspection must be done no less than annually.

Here are some examples of a damaged wire rope, a damaged chain and a worn synthetic sling.

When was your lifting equipment last inspected?



## CONN-OSHA~ Training Update...

**Introduction to OSHA** *January 7, 2015 from 10:00 to noon* This session will discuss the basic components of the Compliance Visit and review the CONN-OSHA's Consultation Services that will help employers reduce workers compensation costs, training costs, medical costs, legal costs, and absenteeism.

**Powered Industrial Trucks** *February 25, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to noon* This workshop includes the basic requirements of the OSHA 29 CFR 1910.178 Powered Industrial Truck Standard which affects both General Industry and Construction material handling operations.

**Construction Site Safety** *March 11, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to noon* Construction managers, first line supervisors, and construction employees will be provided with an overview of four areas of concern on the construction site. Program contents include: fall protection, scaffolding and ladder safety, electrical hazards, and excavation & trenching safety.

**Breakfast Roundtable** This discussion group meets the third Tuesday of every month from 8:15 am to 9:45 am. Pre-registration is required. Visit our web page for more information: <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/osha/Breakfast/index.htm> To be placed on the e-mail distribution list, contact John Able at [able.john@dol.gov](mailto:able.john@dol.gov).

Classes are free and are held at 200 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield, CT in Conference Room A/B (unless otherwise noted). To register, contact Catherine Zinsser at [zinsser.catherine@dol.gov](mailto:zinsser.catherine@dol.gov). Pre-registration is required. A Photo I.D. is also required to allow entry into a public building. For more training information, visit the CONN-OSHA web site [www.ConnOsha.com](http://www.ConnOsha.com).