

**Risk Management
Environmental Health & Safety
Emergency Management
Ergonomics
Continuity of Operations
Campus Security**

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1 Winter Weather Watches, Warnings, and Advisories

Have you ever wondered what weather warnings other than for hurricanes and thunderstorms mean? Below are the descriptions for severe winter weather warnings.

- **Winter Storm Warning:** Indicates heavy snow of at least 6 inches in 12 hours, or at least 8 inches in 24 hours, is expected. It can also be issued if sleet accumulation will be at least half an inch.
- **Ice Storm Warning:** Indicates ice accumulation of at least ¼ inch is expected.

- **Blizzard Warning:** Indicates blizzard conditions (low visibility of less than ¼ mile due to falling and/or blowing snow, and winds at least 35 mph) are expected for at least 3 hours.
- **Freezing Rain Advisory:** Indicates ice accumulation of up to ¼ inch is expected.
- **Winter Weather Advisory:** Issued for one or more of the following:
 - Snow of 3 to 5 inches in 12 hours
 - Sleet accumulation up to ¼ inch
 - Freezing rain in combination with sleet and/or snow or blowing snow.

Some of these conditions we are not accustomed to. However, we all know how crippling freezing weather can be. Stay prepared!

2 Outdoor Worker Winter Safety Tips

Employees who work outside during the cold weather should consider the following safety tips.

- Grease and oil can become thick and hard in cold weather. When this happens, moveable parts of equipment may stick, making it necessary to heat equipment before it will work. Follow established procedures and use proper tools for warming up equipment before operation.
- Tools often become brittle during cold weather. Treat them with care to avoid snapping or breakage, which can cause injury.
- Follow work rules about length of exposure to cold weather and keep warm as possible. Periodically, move to a warm location and drink only warm fluids.
- Bring an extra change of dry clothes in case clothing becomes wet. Carry cold weather survival gear to jobsite when necessary, including such items as blankets, change of

socks, gloves, and a thermos of hot liquid.

3 Safety Stand-Downs

With a new year upon us, it is a good time to reflect on our prior year's progress, and how we can accelerate further as we move forward. One of the best tools for maintaining momentum is the safety stand-down. A safety stand-down is an organized break to discuss safety in the workplace, and an excellent tool for managing any concerns that aren't addressed by standard operations. It also creates an opportunity to remind all members of the team that our first goal for each day is safety; safety for all team members, and safety for all the people in our community that depend upon us. Both goals are valuable, because a safety failure can easily cause weeks or months of setbacks, due to injury, illness, or other adverse results.

Safety stand-downs can easily be added to the beginning of routine department or team meetings. A team leader should always have a topic prepared ([Ally Safety](#) provides some good ideas/presentations for a team leader getting started with this system), but the first option should always be a check for any safety concerns that the team has, and discussion thereof.

If team members seem reticent at first, then a small reward for those who find something to discuss, such as a candy bar or stress ball, might be a useful incentive for getting team members to start looking for ideas. As this becomes a more natural part of the departmental culture, it can lead to many problems being nipped in the bud, preventing potential drops in productivity.

5 Humidity Hazards in the Lab

As temperatures drop, the odds of water pipes getting damaged by freezing increase. Thus, January is a good time to start considering potential humidity hazards within your laboratory. Humidity buildup on the floor can cause slips, trips, and falls. If it lands on your equipment, then it can cause damage to your instruments. If humidity builds up around moisture-sensitive laboratory chemicals, then it may damage any imperfectly-sealed chemicals, possibly even causing release of a chemical hazard. And if the moisture builds up out of sight, then it might promote mold growth in the dark, cool, moist areas. Thus, it is important for you to maintain control of the moisture within your laboratory.

To maintain this control, the following advice is recommended:

- Keep your laboratory clean, so that you can easily see the moisture when it builds up, and so that you can easily reach every part of your laboratory, preventing buildup in areas that you don't access.
- Frequently inspect your water-sensitive chemicals for any signs of contamination.
- If you observe water damage on a ceiling tile, or repeated moisture buildup in a specific area, report it to Facilities, and ask what the incident number is, so that you can build upon the incident if the fix provided does not resolve the problem. Water damage on a ceiling tile indicates a leak, which can cause further moisture buildup within your laboratory if left unaddressed.
- If an element of the HVAC system doesn't seem to be operating correctly, alert Facilities at once, and ask for the incident number when the report is filed. Inadequate ventilation can easily cause

conditions within a space to be well outside the expected range.

6 Ergonomics

The seating position at a workstation should promote comfort and safety. To reduce the painful effects of repetitive motion, follow the below recommendations with working with computers:

- Always sit up straight. Make sure the chair is adjusted to provide adequate back support.
- Place feet flat on the floor or on a footrest. Lower legs should be approximately vertical, and thighs should be approximately horizontal. Most of the body weight should be on the buttocks.
- Ensure there is at least 1 inch of clearance between the top of the thighs and the bottom of the desk or table.
- Keep wrists in a natural position. They should not rest on the edge of the desk.
- Keep the front edge of the workstation chair approximately 4 inches behind the knees.

