

These shared notes are based on Ed Linton's actual experience and knowledge learned from many situations and sources. They are in no way intended to replace a provincially regulated First Aid course.

Frostbite

Frostbite is when the skin and underlying tissue become frozen. Superficial frostbite or as it is sometimes called "FROST NIP" is something most of us have experienced at least once in our lives.

Exposed skin that is affected by frostbite will;

- Turn red and get slightly swollen. The skin eventually takes on a pale appearance but is still pliable to the touch.
- It will have a waxy appearance and be colder than the skin around it.
- The skin will feel hard or solid.

The correct steps to care for frostbite are;

- Gently warm the exposed area but do not rub it. Even slightly frozen tissue can be damaged if not treated gently. The area will probably tingle as it warms.
- After thawing there will be a burning sensation, red or purple mottled colour and blisters may form.
- Always suspect hypothermia.
- Never thaw frostbite if there is a possibility of refreezing. If more than 1 body part is affected or you are unsure, call 911/EMS.
- Warm (not hot) water can be used to gently and gradually warm area, but do not allow body part to touch sides of container.
- If the affected area is a hand or foot then place dry sterile gauze between fingers or toes.
- Do not break blisters if they develop. Cover with loose dry gauze.

Remember, do not rub affected area or place in snow. Always handle affected area gently and get medical attention right away.

***Ed Linton
"FireDog"***