

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

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## **It's Cold Out**

It has been my experience that there are many opinions about our work in the cold. Some are truths and some are myths. Here are a few truths that I have learned;

- Drink plenty of water. At total rest we lose 20 -25 ml. of water per hour in our breath. It increases dramatically with **any** activity.
- Coffee, Tea and other caffeinated drinks cause dehydration and constrict blood vessels, making it even more difficult for proper blood flow. Hot apple cider is my personal favorite in my thermos in cold weather.
- Some medications prescribed or not, as well as alcohol make it difficult for your body to regulate its temperature. These may also alter our judgment as to the temperature.
- Layers of clothing are usually best especially for our type of work.
- Wool is usually warmer and drier than cotton and many synthetics. Cotton actually absorbs moisture.
- Body heat is lost 240 times faster with wet clothes.
- About 50% of our heat is lost through our head. The next greatest amount is usually through our hands and feet. Any other exposed skin would be next.
- Wind and humidity need as much consideration as temperature.
- It does not have to be below freezing for some one to get hypothermia. Hypothermia is simply the body core temperature becoming lower than normal. It saddens me to know that sometimes persons will lower the thermostat in their home because they can't afford the cost of heating. A temperature of even 60-65 F. (15-18 C.) can cause some elderly and children to become hypothermic. It might not be Alzheimer's that's causing Granny's confusion. Confusion is a sign of Hypothermia.
- Cold weather work needs to get the same attention as hot weather work. A person can die from a cold related emergency just as quickly as from a heat related emergency.

We need to have an eye for our Brothers and Sisters in the cold.

**Ed Linton**  
**"FireDog"**