



December 2025

SAFETY TOOLBOX | Cold Stress

Cold stress occurs when the body can no longer maintain its normal temperature. Prolonged exposure to cold environments can lead to serious health risks such as hypothermia, frostbite, and trench foot. Even moderately cold conditions can be dangerous when combined with wind, wetness, or fatigue.



Common Health Risks

- **Hypothermia** | Body temperature drops below 95°F, causing confusion, shivering, and loss of coordination.

- **Frostbite** | Freezing of skin and tissue, often affecting fingers, toes, ears, and nose.
- **Trench Foot** | Prolonged exposure to wet, cold conditions leading to tissue damage.
- **Dehydration** | Cold air can be dry, increasing fluid loss without obvious sweating.

Prevention Tips

- **Dress in layers** | Wear moisture-wicking base layers, insulating mid-layers, and waterproof outerwear.
- **Protect extremities** | Use insulated gloves, socks, and hats to reduce heat loss.
- **Stay dry** | Wet clothing accelerates heat loss; change damp clothes promptly.
- **Take breaks indoors** | Warm up regularly in heated shelters.
- **Stay hydrated** | Drink warm fluids; avoid alcohol and excessive caffeine.
- **Work in pairs** | Monitor each other for early signs of cold stress.

Recognizing Warning Signs

- Shivering that doesn't stop
- Slurred speech or confusion
- Numbness in fingers, toes, or face
- Clumsy movements or fatigue

If symptoms appear, move the person to warmth immediately and seek medical attention.

WELLNESS WORKS | Stay Warm, Stay Well

Winter brings cozy nights and crisp mornings, but it also challenges our health. Shorter days, colder temperatures, and holiday stress can affect both body and mind. With a few mindful habits, you can thrive all season long.



Nutrition for the Season

- **Eat seasonal produce** | Citrus fruits, root vegetables, and winter squash boost immunity.
- **Vitamin D matters** | With less sunlight, consider fortified foods or supplements.
- **Stay hydrated** | Cold air is dry; drink water and herbal teas regularly.

Move Your Body

- **Indoor workouts** | Yoga, dance, or strength training keep energy levels high.
- **Bundle up outdoors** | Walking or hiking in fresh air supports mood and circulation.
- **Stretch often** | Prevent stiffness from cold-weather inactivity.

Rest & Recharge

- **Prioritize sleep** | Aim for 7–9 hours to strengthen immunity.
- **Create a bedtime ritual** | Warm bath, reading, or calming tea.

- **Limit screen time** | Step away from screens before bed to improve sleep quality.

Mental Wellness

- **Combat the winter blues** | Exposure to natural light or light therapy lamps can help.
- **Practice mindfulness** | Meditation or journaling reduces stress.
- **Stay connected** | Social interaction is vital for emotional health.

Prevent Seasonal Illness

- **Wash hands often** | Scrub with soap and water for at least 20 seconds for to reduce flu and cold transmission.
 - **Get your flu shot** | Stay current with vaccines.
 - **Dress appropriately** | Layer clothing to avoid cold stress.
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Upcoming Events



Wellness Awareness

Wellness Awareness offers activities, strategies, and plans to help participants understand, recognize, and manage stressors. Additionally, participants will recognize the importance of self-awareness, demonstrating resilience, concerns with burnout, and intentional wellness planning.

December 16 | 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM MST - Enroll in Luma using code DHR_000049

Red Cross Blood Drives

- **January 20** | 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM – [Capitol Mall – JRW East Conference Room](#)
 - **January 21** | 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM – [Chinden Campus – BLDG 2 – Coral Room](#)
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IDEal College Savings Webinar

[The holidays are the perfect time to give a gift that lasts well beyond the season.](#) By opening or contributing to an IDEal account, you're helping build a brighter future for the children you love while also enjoying Idaho tax advantages when you contribute before December 31. From tax-free growth to easy gifting through Ugift®, this is a meaningful way to make their future a little rosier. Get started today: www.idsaves.org

Upcoming Webinar

Join this FREE webinar to learn about [IDEal – Idaho's 529 College Savings Program](#).

December 10 | 12:00 PM MST - [Register online now!](#)

Benefits Update



New Retirement Plan Options for Employees

The State of Idaho is expanding voluntary retirement plan options to give employees more flexibility in saving for the future.

- **Expansion of Eligibility:** Employees wishing to participate in the PERSI Choice 401k voluntary retirement plan (through “Empower”) are no longer required to be in a benefited position. All state employees who receive a W-2, including part-time and non-benefited, will be able to enroll, if they wish, as of December 1, 2025.
- **New Roth Options:** In addition to pre-tax contributions, new Roth (after-tax) options will be available starting in December. Both pre-tax and Roth contributions will be available as a percent and/or flat-amount deduction.

To enroll or update your contributions, follow this Luma QRG: [Enroll, Make Changes, or Withdraw from Voluntary Retirement Elections](#).

State of Idaho 457b Deferred Compensation Plan - Educational Webinar

Participating in a deferred compensation plan could help you supplement your future pension benefits with additional retirement savings. Join an upcoming 45-minute virtual meeting presented by local Nationwide retirement specialists, where they will discuss the benefits of the State of Idaho 457b Deferred Compensation Plan and answer any questions you may have. Sessions are held the second Tuesday of every month at 10:00 am (MST); click [here](#) to learn more and register.

Unlock Big Holiday Savings with the State of Idaho Employee Savings and Discounts Program!

Explore holiday season deals and savings on hotels, flights, electronics, fashion, appliances, and more. Plus, we're here to support your wellness journey with exclusive discounts on top wellness apps and gym memberships to help you start 2026 healthy and happy. If you haven't signed up yet, simply visit idaho.savings.workingadvantage.com to register and create a free account.
