



NARRAGANSETT COUNCIL

Safety Moment

Hypothermia



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- Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can be generated.
- Hypothermia is experienced when the body temperature drops 2° F or more below that person's normal body temperature.
- The combination of wet clothing and cold temperatures will cause heat loss. Wear multiple layers and stay dry.

Signs & Symptoms of Hypothermia

- Feeling cold, shivering uncontrollably
- Cool or cold skin on the abdomen, chest, or back
- Presence of the “umbles”
 - Stumbles: loss of control over movement
 - Mumbles: slurred or incoherent speech
 - Fumbles: poor coordination or reaction time
 - Grumbles: change in behavior or attitude
- Fatigue

As Hypothermia Progresses the person will exhibit

- Stiff muscles
- No shivering
- Skin that feels ice cold and may appear bluish
- Confusion, agitation, memory loss
- Slow weak pulse
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Loss of consciousness

Care of Hypothermia

- Get victim out of the cold
- Remove wet clothing and wrap in warm, dry clothes. Add additional layers such as sleeping bags
- Give warm liquids to drink. DO NOT give alcohol
- Handle them gently. Excessive movements or rough handling can lead to cardiac arrest.
- Apply warm, dry compresses to the neck, chest, and groin areas.
- Do NOT apply direct heat.
- If a person is unconscious, doesn't have a pulse, or isn't breathing, perform CPR.
- Get emergency care/call 911.



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RESOURCES

- Scout Handbook - First Aid Chapter
- Wilderness First Aid Emergency Care in Remote Locations (4th edition), Chapter 15. Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2015.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—Hypothermia:
www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/staysafe/hypothermia.html
- Mayo Clinic—Hypothermia:
www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hypothermia/symptoms-causes/syc-203526
[82](#)

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