Overexposure to cold (indoors or outdoors) can be harmful to your health.

**Frostbite:** Body tissues may freeze when skin is exposed to extreme cold or touches a very cold object.
- The nose, ears, cheeks, fingers, and toes are at greatest risk.
- Worst cases can cause permanent tissue damage, loss of movement in affected parts, and possibly unconsciousness and death from heart failure.
- Damage may be greater if the body part is thawed, then refrozen.

**Hypothermia:** Exposure to cold may send body temperatures to dangerously low levels.
- It can occur in above-freezing temperatures when it's windy or you’re exhausted or wearing wet clothes.
- Worst cases can lead to unconsciousness and death.

**Factors that increase the risks of frostbite and hypothermia include**
- Age
- Overweight
- Smoking and drinking
- Certain medications, allergies, or poor circulation
- Victim’s failure to recognize symptoms and take prompt action

**Reduce the risks of exposure to extreme cold**
- Avoid bathing, smoking, or drinking alcohol before going into cold conditions.
- Wear layers of loose, dry clothes.
  - If possible, wear wool underneath and waterproof layer on top.
- Always cover hands, feet, face, and head in the cold.
  - An uncovered head can make the body lose up to 40% of its heat.
- Change or get dry immediately if clothes get wet.
- Keep moving while working in the cold. Take regular breaks in warm areas.
- Move to warm area when you start to feel very cold or numb.
  - Have a warm alcohol-free, caffeine-free drink.

**Recognize frostbite and hypothermia symptoms**
- **Frostbite symptoms include:**
  - Feeling extremely cold, then numb-with possible tingling, aching, or brief pain.
  - White or grayish yellow glossy skin, which may blister.
  - Confusion, failing eyesight, and shock as condition progresses.
- **Hypothermia symptoms include:**
  - Chills, shivering, numbness, and sometimes pain in the extremities.
  - Slurred speech, poor coordination, confusion, drowsiness.

**Respond quickly and correctly to frostbite and hypothermia symptoms**
- Act immediately when symptoms develop to prevent serious problems.
- Move to a warm place.
- Replace frozen, wet, or tight clothes with warm clothes or blankets.
- Drink a warm beverage-without alcohol or caffeine.
- Get medical help after first aid treatment.
Take first aid actions for frostbite:

- Warm the frozen part immediately with blankets of warm water.
- Avoid touching the frozen part; don’t rub or hit it.
- Keep the frozen part away from hot stoves, heat lamps, or hot water bottles.

Take first aid actions for hypothermia:

- Cover victim with blankets-and/or lie next to person to give body heat.
- Don’t use hot baths, electric blankets, or hot water bottles.
- Keep the person awake and give artificial respiration if needed.
- Get emergency help immediately if the person loses consciousness.

WORKING IN THE COLD QUIZ

1. The body parts most at risk for frostbite are:
   a. The nose, ears, cheeks, fingers, and toes
   b. The legs
   c. The stomach

2. Hypothermia occurs when your body temperature gets dangerously low.
   a. True
   b. False

3. The risks of hypothermia increase when it’s windy and you’re:
   a. Exhausted or wearing wet clothes
   b. Dressed too heavily

4. Clothing will best protect against frostbite and hypothermia if it’s:
   a. Tight
   b. Loose and Layered
   c. Light-colored

5. When you’re going to work in cold conditions, it’s especially important to cover your head.
   a. True
   b. False

6. If you get wet or feel uncomfortably chilled when working in cold, you should:
   a. Ignore it
   b. Take a break in a warm place
   c. Drink hot coffee laced with brandy

7. Symptoms of frostbite include:
   a. Red eyes
   b. Skin that’s pink, then blue
   c. Skin that’s glossy white or grayish yellow

8. Hypothermia symptoms include:
   a. Cold, shivering, numbness, confusion
   b. Extreme alertness and energy
   c. Skin blisters and tingling sensation

9. If a body part is frostbitten, you should not warm it by:
   a. Rubbing it
   b. Using hot water, a heat lamp, or hot water bottle
   c. Both a and b

10. If you have hypothermia symptoms, you should get medical help.
    a. True
    b. False

Answer Key:
1. a
2. a
3. a
4. b
5. a
6. b
7. c
8. a
9. c
10. a

Source: Business & Legal Reports, Inc., 7-Minute Safety Trainer—Trainer Outline 3025