



Cold and Flu Season—Take Appropriate Steps

Common colds are widespread. It’s been estimated that adults suffer 2 to 5 colds per year making colds one of the leading causes of missed days at work ([CCOHS Common Cold](#)).

Some basic actions you can take to help prevent the spread of colds and flus include:

- Wash hands frequently,
- Disinfect common surfaces (i.e. surfaces that people are likely to come into contact with like doorknobs, tools, machinery, switches),
- Keep hands away from eyes, nose and mouth,
- Cover your mouth with your arm rather than your hand when coughing,
- Sneeze into a tissue or the inside of your sleeve,
- Consider whether a flu shot is an appropriate option for yourself and family

Wondering what the differences between cold and flu symptoms are? Below is an excerpt of a chart from Alberta Health (to view complete [Compare Symptoms Chart](#)).

Symptom	Influenza	Cold
Fever	Usually high, begins suddenly lasts 3-4 days	Sometimes
Headache	Usually	Rarely
Chills, aches, pains	Usually	Rarely
Cough	Usually	Sometimes
Sore throat	Sometimes	Sometimes
Sniffles/sneezes	Sometimes	Usually
Extreme Tiredness	Usually, can last a while	Rarely
Involves whole body	Usually	Never

Additional resources:

- [The Real Flu](#) (NS Capital Health);
- [Fact Sheets and Links](#) (Infection Prevention and Control NS, Department of Health and Wellness).

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Fishing Safety Initiatives

Much work has been done this past year in the area of developing and improving safety in the fishing industry.

One example is the 'Safe at Sea Alliance'. Representatives from Labour and Advanced Education, the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Fisheries Safety Association of Nova Scotia, and the Nova Scotia

Fisheries Council began working together to facilitate the development of this industry led plan. The plan is expected to be unveiled in 2015.

Also throughout the summer and fall the "Man Overboard" initiative took place at various communities throughout the province. The initiative presented live demonstrations, using a local boat captain and crew, with the assis-

tance from the NSCC School of Fisheries, of safety drills, PFDs in action, man overboard drills and more.

Another initiative has been the gathering of several types of pfd's into a kit bag and loaning these to fishing boats.

The ability to borrow the various type of pfd's and to try them in actual working conditions can only lead to

better informed, and ultimately safer choices. To schedule a loan of a kit bag please contact the Fisheries Sector Council at 1-902-742-6167

The OHS Division also has a bag of pfd's and will bring them to any presentation it undertakes with the fishing sector, however this bag is not available for loan.

Administrative Penalties

Since October 1 of 2014 the Province's revised Occupational Health and Safety Administrative Penalty system has been in place.

Under the new system penalties are imposed by the officers on a graduated system.

The system would see officers focusing on education and raising awareness of the workplace parties and enforcing the law through compliance orders before issuing penalties. However, officers have the discretion to forgo the graduated approach and issue penalties for high risk infractions. These

are infractions where a person or persons are exposed to a hazard or danger that could be reasonably expected to cause serious injury, illness or death.

The Division has developed a 'guideline for issuing administrative penalties' that lists the various [High Risk](#) sections of the Regulations.

In a brief review of selected penalties issued since October 1, the most penalties have been issued for infractions of Fall Protection requirements. Primarily:

- person working at heights without a means of fall protection,
- no fall protection training, and
- no fall protection plan or safe work procedure.

There were also penalties issued for:

- improperly erected, or incomplete, scaffolds,
- working near power lines without a clear-

ance certificate from the utility,

- electrical rooms with flammables being stored in them (there should be nothing unrelated to electrical rooms stored in them), and
- Using equipment, tools, machinery contrary to manufacturer's specifications

Avoid penalties. Know what your OHS requirements are.



Protective Toe Overshoe

On January 1, 2015 the Canadian Standards Association published CSA Z334 'Over the shoe protectors' and manufacturers will have a year to comply.

This standard deals specifically with protective footwear meant for temporary use only.

Currently the NS regulations do not allow for anything other than protective footwear that meets the CSA standard Z 195-14 'Protective Footwear'; however, in light of this new CSA protective toe overshoe standard, it is consid-

ering allowing their use in the appropriate situations.

The following information is excerpted from "Z334: The steel overshoe gets a regulatory make-over" (to read the complete article go to [Steelflex](#)).

The new standard is for occasional-use protective footwear that is slipped over a shoe. The standard also clearly states that the overshoes are not to be regarded as 'full-time' safety footwear.

The difference between the old and the new standard lies at the toe. The new

standard recognizes not all toe caps are the same. The ones used in protective overshoes are higher and wider to allow for a foot already wearing a shoe.

In practical terms this means that while Z 195 has a minimum clearance of no less than 13.2 millimeters after impact (about 1/2 inch), adequate for safety shoes and boots, this would not be adequate for a safety overshoe. The post-impact clearance for an overshoe is 41.7 mm, thereby taking into ac-

count the thickness of soles and toes with room to spare.

Protective overshoes under Z334 will feature a purple patch with a white hourglass symbol to indicate temporary use. Hang-tags or inserts at point-of-purchase will also emphasize that message, and state that the overshoes are not to be worn over pointed-toe and open-toe/open-heel footwear.

To purchase the standard go to [CSA Group](#).

Hazard Alert: Battery Explosion

A timely Hazard Alert from WorkSafe NB (for the full alert go to [Battery Explosion Injures Worker](#)).

A worker was injured when struck by fragments and acid from an exploding battery while removing a booster cable after boosting a battery. On investigation it was determined that cold weather, a discharged battery and the boosting procedures were contributing factors.

Powered mobile equipment batteries are especially prone to discharge in cold weather due to frequent idling and many starts and stops. When charge drops below 12.4 volts, the electrolyte (acid and water mixture) in the battery separates. The battery acid then reacts with lead plates inside the battery, creating a highly explosive hydrogen gas. As pressure inside the battery increases the gas is vented to the outside through ventilation openings. When

combined with potential sparking from placing and removing booster cables this can lead to an explosion. Some suggested preventive actions:

- Where feasible remove batteries at end of day and reinstall in morning,
- Avoid boosting a frozen battery. Check for signs of freezing by removing filler plugs. For batteries with no caps check for cracking or bulging,
- Know and follow proper jump starting procedure,
- Attach the negative cable (black) to a metal surface in the engine compartment away from the battery to be charged

Be alert and exercise caution.



Annual Safety Conference

March is fast approaching and that means Safety Services Nova Scotia 33rd Annual Workplace Health and Safety Conference.

The conference will be held on March 22-24, 2015 at the World Trade and Convention Centre, Halifax, NS. The theme this year is, Cutting Edge Safety: New Challenges, New People, New Approaches.

Delegate Registration is now open. For pricing information, registration, detailed agenda, sponsors and exhibitors floorplan go to [Safety Services Nova Scotia: Workplace Health and Safety Conference](#).

Staff from Labour and Advanced Education will present at two of the sessions.

In one session learn about the changes to WHMIS as Canada transitions to the Globally Harmonized System. The second session will bring you up to date on the progress of Phase 2 of the Workplace Health and Safety regulations and how you can have input to the future Phase 3.

Aside from the many informative sessions scheduled throughout the 2 days, the Conference is also a great opportunity to meet and connect with like minded people with a keen interest in making workplaces safer.

Links to related agencies:

- [Nova Scotia WCB](#)
- [Workers Compensation Appeals Tribunal \(WCAT\)](#)
- [Workers' Advisers Program \(WAP\)](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Insurance System \(WSIS\)](#)
- [Office of the Employer Advisor Nova Scotia](#)
- [Service Canada / Français](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety \(CCOHS\) / Français](#)
- [CanOSH \(Canada's National Workplace Health and Safety Website\) / Français](#)

Ice: Slips and Falls

Icy surfaces are a potential hazard for slips and falls. Parking areas, sidewalks, walkways, etc. are all subject to weather conditions. Once inside, lobbies and foyers are subject to snow and ice melt from outside and may cause slipping hazards.

Part 13 of the Occupational Safety General Regulations, [Premises and Building Safety, Construction and Demolition](#), outlines the regulatory requirements.

Specifically section 139(3) notes that a walking surface is to be kept free from falling or slipping hazards by removing ice, snow or water as reasonably practicable.

Also section 140 deals with the requirements for a safe means of access and exit from all work areas. This would apply not only to the walking surface but to the potential for icicles falling from overhead as well.

Finally, aside from walking surfaces or parking areas, caution should be exercised in general when working outdoors. Recently, while working at replacing some siding, an employee slipped on a patch of ice under some light snow and broke their leg. Where possible assess your work area, note any hazardous conditions and correct them as needed.

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