



VSC Cold Weather Guidelines

Dressing for the cold

When temperatures drop and wind increases, the body loses heat more rapidly. It is important to dress appropriately when training or playing in cold weather. This also means to not overdress. Layering clothing in a specific way (see box) is recommended and very effective. The layers can be added or removed based on body temperature and changing environmental conditions, such as temperature and wind. Allow players to wear additional clothing, like gloves, sweatshirts, sweatpants and/or hats or headbands. Also, avoid sweating before going outside because your body will



Stay Dry

Wet and damp conditions add to the risk of injury or illness during cold weather. Players, coaches and referees should recognize these factors and use additional caution to watch for potential cold injuries. If players do get wet during training or play, remove wet or saturated clothing and replace it with dry clothing. This becomes more important if the individual will remain out of play or anticipates standing around for a prolonged period of time. A hat, gloves and extra pair of socks can also keep extremities dry in case of snow or rain.

Stay Hydrated

Cold weather often reduces our ability to recognize that we are becoming dehydrated. If you are thirsty, you have already become dehydrated. Try putting warm or hot water in a water bottle so that your water doesn't freeze when training for extended amounts of time outside.

Take Action

During games provide blankets or other items for players to stay warm while they are on the bench and allow additional substitutions or warming breaks.

Wind Chill

Pay attention to the wind chill temperature (WCT) Index. (see chart) Even prolonged exposure in relatively mild temperatures can lead to frostbite. The National Weather Service wind chill chart can serve as a guide to safe play in cold weather.

**The information provided is not a substitute for medical or professional care, and you should not use the information in place of a visit, consultation or the advice of your physician or other healthcare provider. For specific questions and concerns, please consult your health care provider or physician.*

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STEP ONE – DETERMINE WIND CHILL TEMPERATURE

The effects of cold weather can impact health and safety during practices and games. The definition of “cold stress” varies across Canada, depending on how accustomed people are to cold weather. A player from Toronto will have a much different threshold for cold than a player from Vancouver.

		WIND CHILL TEMPERATURE (WCT) INDEX													
		TEMPERATURE IN DEGREES FAHRENHEIT													
WIND SPEED		40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	
		5	36	31	25	19	13	7	1	-5	-11	-16	-22	-28	-34
10	34	27	21	15	9	3	-4	-10	-16	-22	-28	-35	-41		
15	32	25	19	13	6	0	-7	-13	-19	-26	-32	-39	-45		
20	30	24	17	11	4	-2	-9	-15	-22	-29	-35	-42	-48		
25	29	23	16	9	3	-4	-11	-17	-24	-31	-37	-44	-51		
30	28	22	15	8	1	-5	-12	-19	-26	-33	-39	-46	-53		
35	28	21	14	7	0	-7	-14	-21	-27	-34	-41	-48	-55		
40	27	20	13	6	-1	-8	-15	-22	-29	-36	-43	-50	-57		
45	27	19	12	5	-2	-9	-16	-23	-30	-37	-44	-51	-58		
50	26	19	12	4	-3	-10	-17	-24	-31	-38	-45	-52	-60		

STEP TWO – FIND YOUR ALERT LEVEL

Use this chart to determine the alert level at your location based on the wind chill temperature

ALERT LEVEL	WCT (F)	EVENT CONDITIONS	RECOMMENDED ACTION
BLACK	< 0	Extreme Conditions*	Cancel or attempt to move activities indoors. Frostbite could occur
RED	1-15	High Risk for Cold Related Illness*	Consider modifying activity to limit exposure and allow for more frequent chances to rewarm
ORANGE	16-24	Moderate Risk for Cold Related Illness*	Provide additional protective clothing, cover as much exposed skin as practical, and provide opportunities and facilities for rewarming
YELLOW	25-30	Less than Ideal Conditions*	Be aware of the potential for cold injury and notify appropriate personnel of the potential
GREEN	>30	Good Conditions	Normal activities

* In wet environments with colder conditions, the following situations are accelerated. Use additional caution to recognize potential cold injuries. (NOTE: These WCT guidelines were adapted from the NATA position statement: Environmental Cold Injuries by Cappaert et al. 2008.)

Cold Weather Kit Guide



Base Layer (Inner layer)



Middle layer



Outer layer



**Avoid wearing big cotton sweaters as they may become saturated with sweat and large winter jacket which may promote excessive heating.*