

## PRIMARY AUTHORITY ASSURED ADVICE

# Rest Breaks for Cold Store Workers

*If you require further information and the full version of this advice and guidance, please contact the Primary Authority via the Primary Authority Register or email [bfffprimaryauthority@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:bfffprimaryauthority@wakefield.gov.uk)*

*THE PRIMARY AUTHORITY WOULD NOT BE PREPARED TO SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS WHICH CHALLENGE THE ADEQUACY OF THIS POLICY.*

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# Introduction

For the purposes of this guidance a cold store is defined as a warehouse storing goods at temperatures below zero degrees Celsius. There is no designated requirement for specific breaks for employees working in cold stores. Break times must be sufficient in time and frequency to allow workers adequate re-warming.

In frozen food storage environments, more frequent breaks will be required.

There should be special arrangements for the welfare of personnel who are exposed to low temperatures for extended periods. These will include the provision of suitable thermal protective clothing and warming rooms with drinks dispensers.

Suitable and sufficient breaks should be arranged, based on a comprehensive risk assessment. This risk assessment needs to consider many factors including the individual, the work activity and the temperature of the working environment.

Risk Assessment Factors to Consider:

Temperature – work environment

Other Environmental Factors – e.g, oxygen reduced systems

Length – time exposed

Task – cold affects mental reactions and dexterity skills

Health – of the individual (Health screening of employees prior to starting work, medical condition(s) e.g, asthma, Raynaud's Phenomenon);

Age of the employee (young persons / older workers)

Means of escape – entrapment in cold environment

Task Rotation – limit exposure times to extreme temperatures

PPE provision – several layers of thin clothing better than one thick layer

Rest Facilities – available, heated, drying facilities, drinks available

Supervision – of employees (following work systems i.e. breaks taken / PPE worn appropriately)

Information – employees on signs of cold stress (BFFF advice for employees' guidance)

Local Heating cabs (Mechanical Handling Equipment)

Further information Sources:

HSE guidance HSG76 'Warehousing and storage- A guide to health and safety'.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg76.pdf> includes a temperature- controlled storage section makes reference to working breaks and the necessity for a comprehensive risk assessment. Page 125 - 135 (paragraphs 690 - 731)

BS7915:1998 – Ergonomics of the thermal environment – Guide to the design & evaluation of working practices for cold indoor environments

BS EN ISO 15743:2008 Ergonomics of the Thermal Environment – cold workplaces, risk assessment & management.

These documents are available to purchase only from the British Standards Institute and are a technical guide to working in cold environments.





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