

# Cold & Wet Conditions Electrical Safety Policy



While electrical shock in the workplace may occur at any time, incidents across Canada peak during the fall, winter, and spring thaw. It's not hard to understand why. The risk of electrical shock increases significantly in wet, snowy, and freezing conditions. That's why it's important to assess and control the electrical hazards to which your own workers may be exposed. Here's a template Safety Policy you can adapt. Go to the OHS Insider website for a comprehensive Cold and Wet Conditions Electrical Safety & Compliance Game Plan.

## Cold & Wet Conditions Electrical Safety Policy

### 1. PURPOSE

ABC Company has adopted this Policy to prevent electrical shock, electrocution, burns, and related injuries arising from the use of electrical equipment in wet, damp, snowy, icy, or cold conditions and to ensure compliance with the Canadian Electrical Code (CEC), [province] Occupational Health and Safety Act ("Act"), the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations ("Regulations"), provincial safety laws governing electrical work, the ABC Company Occupational Health and Safety Program ("OHS Program") and other applicable standards

for electrical safety at ABC Company workplaces.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

As used in this Policy:

**“Cold or wet conditions”** means environmental conditions where low temperatures, snow, ice, freezing rain, condensation, or wind chill may affect the safety or integrity of electrical equipment, and/or any environment where moisture is present, including rain, snow, slush, standing water, condensation, washdowns, or thawing operations.

**“De-energization”** means a process to ensure that machinery or equipment that is about to be serviced is made safe to work on by shutting off the energy sources to circuits and equipment and depleting any stored energy so as to put the machinery or equipment in a zero-energy state before the servicing or work begins.

**“GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter)”** means a device that is designed to protect against electrical shock by interrupting a circuit when a ground fault is detected.

**“Practicable”** means possible given current knowledge, technology, and invention.

## 3. GENERAL POLICY

Where practicable, work in cold or wet conditions or conductive locations should be avoided. The use of portable tools and equipment powered by sources other than 120 V ac (e.g., batteries, air, hydraulics) should be minimized in cold or wet conditions or conductive locations. Where working in a damp or wet location cannot be avoided, a GFCI must be provided. Where possible, water should be removed and fans/dehumidifiers used to promote drying should be used

before work begins.

## 4. SCOPE OF POLICY

The intent of this Policy is to ensure that all workers engaged to perform work for ABC Company at its work sites, whether indoors or outdoors, involving actual or potential exposure to electrical hazards due to cold or wet conditions are adequately protected regardless of who employs those workers or the terms of their employment with ABC Company, including:

- Full- and part-time workers paid by ABC Company.
- Temporary employees placed by an outside agency to work at the site.
- Contract labourers engaged to perform work at the site.
- Volunteers who work at the site for free.
- Workers employed by prime contractors, contractors, and subcontractors to perform work at the site under a contract with ABC Company.

## 5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### 5.1 Employer

As the “employer,” ABC Company is responsible for:

- Taking every reasonable precaution to protect workers from electrical hazards, including but not limited to cold or wet conditions.
- Ensuring that electrical equipment used at the workplace is suitable for cold or wet conditions.
- Providing the training, tools, and resources necessary to implement this Policy.
- Overall enforcement and review of this Policy.

### 5.2 Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Identifying electrical hazards associated with cold or wet conditions.
- Ensuring required controls are in place before work begins.
- Verifying inspections of electrical equipment are completed.
- Enforcing this Policy including, if necessary, via the imposition of discipline against workers who commit infractions.
- Stopping work if unsafe electrical conditions due to cold or wet conditions exist.

### **5.3 Workers**

Workers are responsible for:

- Following this Policy and all safe work procedures.
- Inspecting electrical equipment before use.
- Using required protective devices and PPE.
- Immediately reporting damaged equipment or unsafe conditions.
- Refuse unsafe work involving electrical hazards in accordance with the ABC Company OHS Work Refusals Policy and procedures.

## **6. GENERAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY EQUIPMENT & WORK RULES**

Electrical equipment must be approved, maintained, used in accordance with manufacturer instructions, and appropriate for the environmental conditions in which it is used. Electrical work must not be performed in cold or wet conditions unless required controls are in place. Energized electrical work must be avoided whenever reasonably practicable.

## 7. GFCI PROTECTION

GFCI protection is mandatory for:

- All 120-volt, 15, and 20-amp receptacles used outdoors.
- Electrical equipment used in wet or damp conditions.
- Temporary power and extension cord setups.

Portable GFCIs must be used where fixed GFCI protection is not available. Required GFCIs must be:

- Tested before use or at the start of each shift.
- Removed from service if they fail testing.

GFCIs must not be bypassed, disabled, or removed for convenience.

## 8. EXTENSION CORDS & TEMPORARY WIRING

Only CSA-approved extension cords rated for outdoor and cold weather use are permitted. Where used, extension cords must:

- Be free of cuts, cracks, exposed conductors, or damaged insulation.
- Remain flexible at low temperatures.
- Be protected from snow, ice, standing water, and mechanical damage.

Electrical connections must be:

- Elevated off the ground where practicable.
- Protected from moisture ingress.

Household or light-duty extension cords are prohibited on worksites.

Damaged or stiff cords must be removed from service immediately.

## **9. ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT SELECTION & USE**

Electrical tools and equipment must be:

- Rated for outdoor or wet conditions where applicable.
- Suitable for the temperature range in which they are used.

Equipment enclosures must have appropriate environmental ratings (e.g., IP or NEMA).

Temporary heaters, lighting, and heat trace systems must:

- Be approved for the intended environment.
- Be installed and used in accordance with manufacturer instructions.

Battery-powered tools must be used where practicable to reduce electrical shock risk.

## **10. ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT INSPECTION & MAINTENANCE**

Electrical equipment used in cold or wet conditions must be inspected:

- Before each use by workers.
- At intervals determined by risk, site conditions, and manufacturers' instructions.

Inspections must:

- Include cords, plugs, connectors, and GFCIs.
- Check for signs of moisture ingress, cracking, or brittleness.

Any equipment found to be defective must be:

- Tagged out of service.
- Repaired or replaced before reuse.

Inspection records must be maintained in accordance with ABC Company procedures.

## **11. LOCKOUT, DE-ENERGIZATION, AND SAFE WORK PROCEDURES**

Electrical equipment must be de-energized and locked out before:

- Maintenance or repair.
- Thawing, cleaning, or adjustment.

Work on energized electrical equipment in wet or cold conditions is prohibited unless:

- De-energization is not possible.
- A hazard assessment is completed.
- Additional controls are implemented and approved.

Improvised or temporary fixes are not permitted.

## **12. TRAINING & AWARENESS**

Workers exposed to electrical hazards in cold or wet conditions must receive training on:

- Increased shock risk due to moisture and cold.
- Proper use and testing of GFCIs.
- Recognition of cold-related equipment damage.
- Reporting and refusal procedures.

Written training records must be kept to document:

- The date training was provided.
- The name of the person who provided training.
- The information the training covered.
- The steps taken to verify that the worker who received the training actually understood and was competent to

apply the training provided.

## **13. INCIDENT REPORTING**

All electrical incidents, near misses, or equipment failures related to cold or wet conditions must be reported and investigated in accordance with ABC Company incident investigating and reporting policies and procedures.

## **14. MONITORING & DISCIPLINE**

Steps will be taken to monitor and review this Policy including via addressing electrical equipment safety during field inspections and monthly workplace inspections. Failure to comply with the terms of this Policy will be grounds for discipline up to and including termination in accordance with the terms of ABC Company disciplinary policies and collective agreements.

## **15. PRIME CONTRACTORS, CONTRACTORS, AND SUBCONTRACTORS**

All prime contractors, contractors and subcontractors hired to perform work at an ABC Company workplace where workers may use electrical equipment in cold or wet conditions will be notified of and required to comply with the terms of this Policy and applicable safe work procedures. Prime contractors may follow the terms of either this Policy or alternative policies in performing the work under their control, provided that those alternative policies:

- Meet the requirements of all applicable laws, regulations, and standards.
- Provide at least equivalent protection as this Policy.
- Are coordinated with this Policy.