

November 4, 2014

DIRECTIVE:	JOB CORPS INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 14-24
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TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS
ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: LENITA JACOBS-SIMMONS
Acting National Director
Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Winter Weather Preparedness 2014

1. Purpose. To provide the Job Corps community with information about winter weather preparedness, including carbon monoxide exposure prevention, heating system maintenance, and injury prevention.

2. Background. The first day of winter, or the “Winter Solstice,” in the Northern Hemisphere will occur Sunday, December 21, 2014. El Niño – unusually warm ocean temperatures that spur changes in traditional weather patterns – will play a part in winter weather temperatures and snowfall this year. Parts of Montana, Wyoming, and western South Dakota have already experienced measurable snowfall.

“Below average temperatures are favored in parts of the south-central and southeastern United States, while above-average temperatures are more likely in the western U.S., Alaska, Hawaii and New England,” according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) (http://www.noaaneews.noaa.gov/stories2014/20141016_winteroutlook.html).

Regardless of the predictions, centers must be prepared for worst-case, and sudden weather scenarios. Each winter, Job Corps experiences numerous slip-and-fall injuries due to slick walking surfaces from ice, snow, and rainfall. It is important for centers to have comprehensive emergency action plans in place to respond to possible weather-related hazards.

3. Action. Job Corps centers are encouraged to review safety plans, and standard operating procedures regarding winter weather and related subjects, and begin preparations for weather-related events. In an ongoing effort to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff during extreme weather conditions, the National Office of Job Corps recommends that centers continue to implement the following preventive measures to reduce the potential for injuries, fatalities, and major property damage:

a. *Review and test the center’s emergency action plan.* The first step to prepare for

an emergency like a weather-related disaster is to develop a comprehensive plan that will be used in such an event. Once a plan has been developed, conduct drills to test the plan's thoroughness. Refer to the Job Corps Policy and Requirements Handbook Chapter 5, Section 5.20, R3 for details.

- b. *Participate in state and local emergency planning committees.* Ensure that the Job Corps center is not isolated from the community in which it is located. Attend local emergency planning meetings, get to know emergency services personnel and first responders, and take an active role in local emergency planning activities.
- c. *Build relationships with local businesses and schools.* Make the Job Corps center an important community partner. Find ways to plan and collaborate with local businesses and schools to ensure that the center will be able to procure necessities during emergencies.
- d. *Avoid ice.* Walking on ice is extremely dangerous. Many cold-weather injuries result from falls on ice-covered sidewalks, steps, driveways, and porches. Keep all steps and walkways as free of ice as possible by using rock salt or another chemical de-icing compound. Sand or kitty litter may also be used on walkways to reduce the risk of slipping.
- e. *Remove snow.* Clearing snow from stairs, sidewalks, roadways, and other areas accessible to students and staff (e.g., entrances, exits, and awnings) is critical for maintaining safe grounds and preventing injuries. Personnel responsible for snow removal should be physically able to perform the work.
- f. *Dress for the cold.* Wearing proper clothing keeps the body warm and dry. Layering of clothing versus one thick layer is a more effective way to stay warm. The best clothing has good ventilation so that sweat can evaporate. Wet clothing increases heat loss and the potential for hypothermia.
- g. *Know the signs of cold weather injuries.* This is important for recognizing when students or staff may need medical attention:
 - (1) Frostnip usually affects areas that are exposed to the cold, such as the cheeks, nose, ears, fingers, and toes, leaving them white and numb. Frostnip can be treated at home by placing affected fingers in one's armpits. Other affected areas can be covered with warm hands. Never rub the affected areas.
 - (2) Frostbite is a serious injury in which deep layers of tissues freeze, causing tissue damage. Victim should be taken to a medical facility for treatment.
 - (3) Hypothermia is a life-threatening condition in which the core body

temperature falls below 95° F. Persons suffering from hypothermia may lose consciousness. Victim should be taken to a medical facility for treatment.

- h. *Perform preventive maintenance and weatherproofing.* The end of daylight savings time is a good reminder to inspect heating systems, and to change batteries in carbon monoxide detectors. Many of the leading insurance carriers recommend the following winter weather tips:
- (1) Schedule inspection and cleaning of furnaces, ductwork, and heating systems.
 - (2) Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows to reduce drafts.
 - (3) Replace batteries in thermostats, if necessary, smoke detectors, and carbon monoxide (CO) monitors.
 - (4) During power outages, disconnect electrical appliances not connected to surge protectors to avoid power surges when electricity is restored.
 - (5) Keep exterior doors closed to help eliminate drafts.
 - (6) Remove ice and snow from rooftops to avoid structural collapse, damage to roof, or interior leaking.
- i. *To prevent pipes from freezing,* the following steps are suggested:
- (1) Detach all garden hoses, and shut off water to sprinkler systems.
 - (2) Install faucet covers on all external faucets.
 - (3) Make sure that the main water valve is accessible.
 - (4) Wrap pipes nearest exterior walls and in crawl spaces with heating tape, or pipe insulation to prevent freezing.
 - (5) Keep all windows near water pipes closed, or cover open-air vents.
 - (6) Insulate outside walls or unheated areas of the building.
- g. *To prevent winter weather vehicle accidents,* centers are encouraged to review the following safe winter driving guidelines:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:
www.nhtsa.gov/links/WinterDrivingTips/NHTSA_Winter-Driving-Tips.pdf

Additional resources can be found via the following links:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Extreme Cold: A Prevention Guide to Promote Your Personal Health and Safety,”
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/pdf/extreme-cold-guide.pdf>

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Winter Weather: Plan. Equip. Train.
https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter_weather/index.html
- Ready.gov, Winter Weather and Extreme Cold,
<http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

Addressees are to ensure this Information Notice is distributed to all appropriate staff.

4. Expiration Date. Until superseded.
5. Inquiries. Direct all inquiries to Heather Edmonds at (202) 693-3774, or edmonds.heather@dol.gov.

Attachment

Preventing Carbon Monoxide (CO) Exposure and Safe Use of Supplemental Heating Systems