



Civil Air Patrol, CAWG, Group 6

60-Second Safety Advisor, November 2006

Dealing with Killer Cold -- Hypothermia

As we head into colder weather in our northerly squadrons and in the mountains everywhere in Group 6's operating area, we need to review hypothermia, the killer cold. Ground team members must never underestimate the debilitating effects of cold, especially when combined with wet weather – rain, snow, sleet, etc.

- **Remember layered clothing.** Several layers of clothing provide more effective insulation than a single heavier material. An example: a fleece liner under BDUs (which are available in winter weight specifications).
- **Rain gear a must.** A Gortex outer liner (with hood) will prevent “wicking.” Wet clothes actually draw heat out from the body into the atmosphere.
- **Awareness.** Often people suffering hypothermia won't recognize it – or pass it off as being “chilly.” Team members should keep an eye on each other.
- **Onset symptoms.** Early symptoms include shivering, usually violent; mood changes; altered consciousness; pale skin; slow or weak pulse; shallow breathing.
- **Severe symptoms.** A *lack* of shivering, unconsciousness.

Treatment:

- **Protect against cold.** Seek shelter from cold, precipitation and wind.
- **Change to dry clothes.** Synthetic materials are best.
- **Cover patient.** Space blankets and sleeping bags are good wraps.
- **Provide heat.** Water bottles or chemical packs work well.
- **Feeding.** Replacing calories is vital – sugars, carbohydrates and sweet warm drinks.
- **Stay awake.** It is vital the patient maintain consciousness.

(Note to all Group 6 personnel: Neither the Aircrew Safety Briefing nor the 60-Second Safety Advisor are meant to be top-down only. Comments, criticisms, suggestions and contributions are welcome and may be incorporated into future issues. Send comments to cbagdikian@suddenlink.net.)

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