

YOUR HANDS VERSUS THE COLD



DO YOU KNOW HOW TO PROTECT YOUR HANDS FROM THE COLD THIS WINTER?

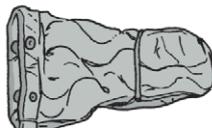
FREEZING TEMPERATURES AND HOWLING WINDS CAUSE MORE THAN DISCOMFORT. THEY LIMIT FINGER MOVEMENT AND INFLICT FROSTBITE.

If you're facing brutal cold, get the extreme cold weather mitten set. The set includes shells, liners and a harness. They'll protect you down to -60°F. Here are the NSNs:

For intense cold, wear extreme cold weather mitten set



Size	NSN 8415-00-782-
Small	6715
Medium	6716
Large	6717



When the liners wear out, there's no need to spend money on a new mitten set. Order just the liners:



Carry two pairs of liners in case one gets wet

Size	NSN 8415-01-323-
Small	2174
Medium	2175
Large	2176

ECWCS Mittens

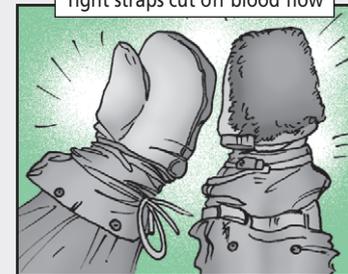
Just don't try to order a separate harness for the mittens. It's no longer available in the supply system.

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND ABOUT THE SHELLS AND LINERS...



- Wear the shells and liners together for the most warmth. They trap warm, dry air among their fibers and between layers. The trapped air insulates hands to keep the heat in and the cold out.
- The liners are made of quilted polyester to wick away moisture from your skin.
- Most of the time you don't want to wear the liners alone. They could get wet, and wet liners can't insulate well. There are times, though, when the liners alone can serve as anti-contact gloves. They can protect you from contact frostbite or keep your skin from freezing to ice-cold metal.
- Don't draw the mitten shells' straps too tight. Tight straps cut off blood flow and ventilation, two things you need for warm hands.
- Carry two pairs of liners in case one becomes wet from sweat or from handling wet or snow-covered objects.
- Never blow warm breath into mittens. The vapor will condense, freeze and make your hands cold.

Tight straps cut off blood flow



STEP ONE TO SAFEGUARDING YOUR HANDS IS TO WEAR THE RIGHT KIND OF PROTECTION.

STEP TWO IS TO UNDERSTAND THE DANGER POSED BY COLD WEATHER.



POL Gloves

POL, fuel, antifreeze and alcohol have a very low freezing point (-40°F). When bare skin comes in contact with these super-cooled liquids, frostbite can occur instantly. Anyone working with these liquids in cold weather must wear cold weather petroleum handler's gloves.



HERE ARE THE NSNs...

Size	NSN 8415-01-
X-small	475-9987
Small	466-3531
Medium	466-3586
Large	466-3587
X-large	475-9981

Danger from the Cold

Now that you have your hands covered, you need to know about the danger posed by cold weather.

The greatest threat to your hands comes from frostbite. That's the freezing of your tissues. It can range from surface freezing of the skin all the way to the freezing of muscle and bone. The longer you're exposed to cold below 32°F, the worse it gets. A severe case of frostbite could permanently cost you the use of your hands or may result in amputation.



Severe frostbite can cost you your fingers

Here are some of the factors that play a role in frostbite:

- **Air temperature.** The lower the mercury falls below freezing, the greater the risk. Keep in mind, frostbite can't take place if the air temperature is above 32°F.
- **Windchill.** As wind speed increases, it causes the skin to cool faster. Even when natural wind speeds are low, you can be exposed to dangerous windchill. Riding in open vehicles, running and skiing all produce wind across your body.
- **Wet skin.** Wet skin loses heat at a faster rate than dry skin.
- **Touching cold liquids or metal.** Super-cooled fuels or POL in contact with bare skin can cause instant frostbite. Your skin touching cold objects—such as tools, door handles, charging handles, rifle butts or the trigger area of an M16—causes rapid heat loss and greater risk of frostbite.

Signs of Frostbite

The first sign of frostbite is numbness. Other symptoms include:

- a tingling or burning sensation
- red skin, later turning to a waxy yellow (grayish in dark-skinned soldiers)
- tissue that feels wooden to the touch



IF YOU SUFFER FROM ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS, SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY!

Prevention

Aside from wearing the proper cold-weather gloves or mittens, here are some other ways to prevent cold injury:

- Never wear cotton clothing in cold weather. It keeps the sweat next to your skin—and sweat cools the body.
- Divide tasks into shorter segments. That lets you take more breaks so you can warm up in a heated shelter.
- Backpack straps can reduce the blood flow to the arms and hands. So, drop the load every few hours.
- Keep your body active to raise your core body temperature and increase blood flow.
- Avoid sweating.
- Never work alone. Always team up with at least one other soldier.
- You may have to work in shifts, where one team works while the other warms up.
- Use buddy checks to look for signs of frostbite.

Always work as a team in cold weather



Get the Full Story

ALTHOUGH WE'RE TALKING ONLY ABOUT GLOVES, MITTENS AND PROTECTING YOUR HANDS AGAINST THE COLD, ALWAYS REMEMBER: SEVERE COLD THREATENS YOUR ENTIRE BODY.

FROSTBITE ATTACKS NOT ONLY THE HANDS AND FINGERS, BUT THE FEET AND TOES, EARS, NOSE AND CHEEKS AS WELL.



AND THERE ARE OTHER KINDS OF COLD WEATHER INJURIES. COLD, WET CONDITIONS CAN LEAD TO TRENCH FOOT.

UV RAYS REFLECTING OFF THE SNOW CAN BURN YOUR CORNEAS AND CAUSE SNOW BLINDNESS. HYPOTHERMIA—AN EXTREME LOSS OF BODY HEAT—CAN KILL YOU.

AS ALWAYS, KNOWLEDGE IS YOUR BEST DEFENSE. SO, ARM YOURSELF WITH ALL THE FACTS ABOUT COLD WEATHER INJURIES. VISIT THE U.S. ARMY CENTER FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTIVE MEDICINE (USACHPPM) WEBSITE: <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil>



FROM THE HOME PAGE, CLICK ON **COLD WEATHER INJURY PREVENTION**. YOU'LL FIND A VARIETY OF DOCUMENTS COVERING CAUSES, SYMPTOMS, FIRST AID AND PREVENTION.