



Press release

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UK Club issues crew health advice on hypothermia

Sophia Bullard, Crew Health Director at UK P&I Club, discusses the issue of hypothermia, its impact on crew and measures to prevent and treat the condition:

“Due to the nature of their vocation, seafarers are often exposed to the elements and sub-zero conditions. This can result in their body losing heat faster than it can produce it, and with core temperature dropping below 35°C, hypothermia is extremely likely.

“Hypothermia is a very serious condition that can cause hospitalisation and death in extreme cases, as well as mass disruption to crew onboard and cost to ship operators.

What are the main reasons people suffer from hypothermia?

“There are various contributing factors but among the most common are wearing wet or inappropriate clothes for the environment, drinking alcohol or taking drugs that causes blood to cool more quickly, as well as major trauma.

What are the signs and symptoms of hypothermia?

“Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, memory loss, slurred speech, and trembling hands are prevalent symptoms. However, these symptoms can also occur with a huge range of other conditions, so it’s important to assess environmental factors. These include how long the person has been exposed to cold or whether they have been involved in an accident.

How to treat someone that we suspect has hypothermia

“The first step is to get them to a place where you can begin assessment and treatment. If the person is conscious, remove any wet clothing and wrap them in a blanket, sleeping bag or something similar. Make sure you also cover their head but not their face, and as long as they’re able to manage their own airway, give them a warm drink.

“If the individual is unconscious, assess their breathing and if it’s undetectable begin CPR and continue the rewarming process. In some cases, hypothermic victims who are rewarmed can be successfully resuscitated.”

For more advice* and a detailed Q&A, please visit: [Crew Health Advice: What is hypothermia?](#)

**This advice was compiled in collaboration with Red Square Medical.*

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Notes to Editors

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