

## EAGLE WINGS MOTORCYCLE ASSOCIATION



### Emergencies

#### Exposure to Cold

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The best way to handle any kind of emergency is not to let it happen in the first place. That's not always possible, especially if you live in a place with mountains where the weather can change every mile or so. It is extremely important to keep warm. When your body decides that it's cold the blood starts getting diverted away from the surface of your body towards the vital organs. As the cold worsens, the body will start to shut down some of the functions that it deems non-essential.

- ⇒ One of the first things to get axed is the judgment function.
- ⇒ Eventually you can't move your fingers and toes.
- ⇒ Your mind is on autopilot

This causes a very dangerous situation for any motorcyclist. If you find yourself getting cold, stop at the next available pull-off. A restaurant would be great. Take some time and warm up. Don't just inhale a cup of coffee or hot chocolate. Have something to eat to give your body some energy so it can keep itself warm.

Think about the risks, is this ride worth risking your life? Plan ahead. Consider the conditions you may be riding in. Use the worst case scenario (What's the worst weather you might encounter?) and dress for that.

### EQUIPMENT

The best equipment will be safer, last longer look better and will be more comfortable than a similar article of dubious manufacture.

- ⇒ Wind deflectors
  - ⇒ Side
  - ⇒ Under mirror
  - ⇒ Hand protectors
- ⇒ Vent blockers
- ⇒ Toe & Hand Warmers
- ⇒ Electric handgrips

## **EXPOSURE TO COLD - FIRST AID**

- ⇒ **Hypothermia** is a condition that comes about when the body's heat regulating mechanism can't cope with the conditions it's working in.
  - ⇒ Hypothermia is not uncommon when riding a bike.
  - ⇒ Circulation of blood through the surface capillaries and to the extremities of the body is controlled by body core temperature.
  - ⇒ Blood in the arms and legs is cooled by windblast - their large surfaces act as radiators - and returned to the core body, where it is reheated before being pumped out again, cooling the core bit by bit.
  - ⇒ When the core temperature gets too low, circulation to the extremities and the surface capillaries shuts down to reduce further heat loss.
  - ⇒ When peripheral circulation shuts down, your hands and feet (arms and legs) get cold.
  - ⇒ When your hands and feet get cold, muscles become stiff and unresponsive, you can't control the bike and the pain when you warm up again causes you to burst into tears.
  - ⇒ Your brain switches out of circuit as the first stages of hypothermia set in!
- ⇒ The metabolism gets slower, the body temperature drops, and the sufferer becomes drowsy, confused and moves unsteadily. You don't have to feel shivery in order to have hypothermia. It's dangerous and a doctor and a cardiac ambulance should always be called if hypothermia is suspected.
- ⇒ **Signs of Hypothermia**
  - ⇒ The onset of symptoms is usually slow. There is likely to be a gradual loss of mental acuity and physical ability. The person experiencing hypothermia, may be unaware that he/she is in a state that requires emergency medical treatment.
  - ⇒ Symptoms include:
    - ⇒ Apathy or lethargy
    - ⇒ Confusion
    - ⇒ Drowsiness
    - ⇒ Loss of coordination
    - ⇒ Pale and cold skin
    - ⇒ Shock
    - ⇒ Slowing in breathing
    - ⇒ Slurred speech
    - ⇒ Uncontrollable shivering
    - ⇒ Weakness

## FIRST AID TREATMENT

- ⇒ If the victim is conscious, get them out of the cold. Handle them gently. People with hypothermia are at risk for cardiac arrest.
  - ⇒ If the victim is unconscious, check their airway, breathing and circulation. If necessary, and you are trained you may need begin CPR. If breathing at a rate of less than 6 breaths per minute - begin rescue breathing.
  - ⇒ If going indoors is not possible, get the victim out of the wind, cover their head, and insulate them from the cold ground.
  - ⇒ If at all possible, get the victim inside to an area at room temperature and cover them with warm blankets. Once inside remove any wet or constricting clothes and replace them with dry clothing.
  - ⇒ Warm the victim
    - ⇒ Cover the head and neck.
    - ⇒ Apply warm compresses to the neck, chest wall and groin.
    - ⇒ If the victim is alert and can easily swallow, give them warm sweetened nonalcoholic fluids to aid in the warming process.
  - ⇒ Stay with the victim until medical help arrives.
- ⇒ **Do not**
- ⇒ Assume that someone found lying still in the cold is dead
  - ⇒ Use your own comfort to decide if an area is warm enough, since people respond differently to cold
  - ⇒ Attempt to warm a severely hypothermic person without medical advice.
  - ⇒ Use direct heat (such as hot water, heating pad or heat lamp) to warm a victim.
  - ⇒ Give the victim alcohol!

## **FROST BITE**

Frost bite occurs when the skin is exposed to cold without adequate protection. This will cause the skin to freeze. Frost bite is seldom seen in areas with temperate climates. It occurs at sub-zero temperatures or at temperatures just below freezing but with at wind (windchill). Sever frostbite may result in loss of fingers and toes or other exposed body parts.

### **Symptoms**

- ⇒ Pins and needles sensation
- ⇒ Numbness
- ⇒ Skin becomes hard, pale, cold and has no feeling
  - ⇒ When skin has thawed out it becomes red and painful (early frostbite)
  - ⇒ White and numb (tissue has started to freeze)
- ⇒ Very sever frostbite may cause blisters, gangrene and damage to deep tissue.

## TREATMENT

- ⇒ Remove victim from the cold and into a warm place.
- ⇒ Loosen or remove wet and/or tight clothing. Remove jewelry.
- ⇒ Don't rub the area with snow or soak it in cold water.
- ⇒ Warm the affected area by soaking in a tub of warm water (101 degrees F to 104 degrees F) and an antiseptic solution.
- ⇒ Stop when the affected area becomes red not when sensation returns. This should take about 45 minutes. If done too rapidly, thawing can be painful and blisters may develop.
- ⇒ If warm water is not available, cover victim with blankets, coats, sweaters, etc or place the frostbitten extremity in a warm body area such as in an armpit or on the abdomen.
- ⇒ Keep exposed area elevated, but protected.
- ⇒ Never rub or massage a frostbitten area.
- ⇒ Protect exposed area from the cold. It is more sensitive to reinjury.
- ⇒ Don't break blisters.
- ⇒ Apply dry, sterile dressing to the frostbitten areas. Put dressings between frostbitten fingers or toes to keep them separated.
- ⇒ Move thawed areas as little as possible.
- ⇒ Re-freezing of thawed extremities can cause more severe damage. Prevent re-freezing by wrapping the thawed areas and keeping the victim warm. If re-freezing can not be guaranteed, it may be better to delay the initial re-warming process until a warm, safe location is reached.
- ⇒ If the frostbite is extensive, give warm drinks to the victim in order to replace lost fluids.

## DO NOT

- ⇒ Do not thaw out a frostbitten area if it cannot be kept thawed. Refreezing may make issue damage even worse.
- ⇒ Do not use direct dry heat (such as a radiator, campfire, heating pad or hair dryer) to thaw the frostbitten areas. Direct heat can BURN the tissues that are already damaged.
- ⇒ Do not rub or massage the affected area.
- ⇒ Do not disturb blisters on frostbitten skin.
- ⇒ Do not smoke or drink alcoholic beverages during recover as both can interfere with blood circulation.

## Call immediately for emergency medical assistance if:

- ⇒ There has been severe frostbite, or if normal feeling and color do not return promptly from home treatment of mild frostbite.
- ⇒ Frostbite has occurred recently and new symptoms develop, such as fever, discoloration, or drainage from the affected body part.