FIRST AID FACT SHEET
Cold-induced Condition

Cold-induced conditions occur when the body’s core temperature drops below 35°C. The body’s natural reaction is to prevent body heat escaping and does this by shutting down blood vessels in the skin.

What to do
1. Follow DRSABCD St John Action Plan.
2. Remove the casualty to a warm, dry place.
3. Protect the casualty and yourself from wind, rain, sleet, cold or wet ground.
4. Help the casualty to lie down in a comfortable position.
5. Handle the casualty as gently as possible and avoid excess activity or movement.
6. Remove any wet clothing.
7. Warm the casualty by:
   + Placing between blankets, in a sleeping bag, or wrap in a thermal/emergency rescue blanket or similar and cover their head to maintain body heat; and/or
   + Hot water bottles, heat packs may be applied to the casualty’s neck, armpits and groin taking care to avoid burning the casualty. Body to body contact may be used if there are no other means available.
8. Aim to stop the temperature dropping any lower rather than attempt rapid rewarming:
   + DO NOT use radiant heat such as fire or electric heater; and
   + DO NOT rub affected areas.
9. Give casualty warm drinks if conscious.
   DO NOT give alcohol.
10. Urgent medical aid. Call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance.

Caused by
+ The fall in body temperature.
+ If not recognised in the early stages, it has the potential to develop into a serious condition.

Signs & symptoms
+ Feeling cold, shivering.
+ Clumsiness and slurred speech.
+ Apathy and irrational behaviour.

When body temperature drops very low:
+ Shivering usually ceases.
+ Pulse may be difficult to find.
+ Heart rate may slow.
+ Level of consciousness continues to decline.
+ Unconsciousness.
+ Cardiac arrest may occur.

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In a medical emergency call Triple Zero (000)
Book a St John first aid course today | (08) 9334 1233 | stjohnambulance.com.au
Information provided is as per Australian Resuscitation Council Guidelines. These first aid protocols are for the Australian market only. All care has been taken in preparing this information but St John takes no responsibility for its use. This information is not a substitute for practical first aid training with St John.