

Field Deployment

Basic Clothing

You build a house from the ground up – so the clothing you wear for field deployment should be designed in the same manner.

Layering your clothing is the best method of staying warm and dry in the winter and cool and dry in the summer.

Layering has 4 basic levels starting with the underwear layer, an extra insulator layer if needed, the outer clothing layer and finally the shell layer.

ALL SEASONS

During seasonal changes we tend to get a mix of weather conditions so packing your clothing for all four seasons and extremely inclement weather is a good idea.

Even in the summertime, we could get severe weather or tornado's due to a strong **COLD** front moving through the area. The clue here is **COLD FRONT**.

Just this week we have seen highs near 70 and nightly lows in the mid 40's – a 30 degree drop in temperature is enough to trigger hypothermia.

It could be 80-90 degrees and humidity in the 70-80% range before the storm which is short sleeve shirt and shorts weather – and 2-3 days after the storm passes we could likely have snow!

These are the extremes you need to be ready for – and there is no way to tell before you leave the house what it's going to be like in 3 days!

Working in cold environments you should layer your clothing simply because these rapidly changing weather patterns can and do change rapidly.

You could easily have near freezing temperatures at night and warm into the 60-70 degree range during the day.

Adjusting your clothing layers based on this and what activity you are performing will make a huge difference in how you should dress for the event.

Sitting on a post you may want to add a few layers because you're not expending any energy to produce additional body heat.

Doing physical labor or walking continuously, you may wish to drop a layer or two to make yourself more comfortable.

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Be careful not to sweat too much during cold operations as your clothing will absorb the excess moisture and can freeze within the fiber weave of the clothing which will make it hard to move around and can rob your body of its natural ability to stay warm.

The same goes for your feet! Insulated boots and two layers of socks are nice but care must be taken not to allow your feet to get too hot and begin sweating.

Once the socks and boots are wet it is very easy to get frostbite and you could lose some toes if this occurs.

In extreme cold and windy conditions it is very important to keep every inch of skin covered to prevent the cold from doing real damage.

Ski mask and ski goggles will help to protect your mouth, nose, chin, ears and eyes from bitter cold.

If you are susceptible to getting a sore throat if exposed to the cold for a period of time, you may want to invest in a full ski mask that also covers the front and back of your neck.

These are normally made of Nomex or are a knit/woven material that can be rolled up if not needed and just worn as a cap or hat.

Your hands and fingers are of concern too. Layering your gloves is a good idea too.

Thinsulate gloves as a first layer with a fleece lined larger glove to go over the top of the thinsulate glove makes a good combination to keeping your hands warm and dry.

Try using gloves that have lace up closures on them so your long sleeves can be tucked into the gloves then tied to help keep the cold and wet away from your hands.

Starting with bare skin-you need a basic underwear layer that is comfortable and that will wick moisture away from your skin – something that IS NOT COTTON!

In search and rescue we had a saying “COTTON KILLS” because it holds moisture / sweat next to your skin and that makes you cold and miserable, plus it robs your body of the ability to stay warm on its own.

Polypropylene underwear can be found at most outdoor clothing suppliers, hiking-camping stores, etc. and this stuff will wick the moisture away from you.

The important part is to have at least two sets since once this layer gets dirty and saturated, loses the ability to continue wicking the moisture away and needs to be cleaned and dried thoroughly!

So you can wash one pair, even by hand, and allow it to air dry, while wearing the second pair.

EVEN frozen dried, the ice can be beaten out of the fabric to be worn.

A full Thinsulate underwear set for the bottom and top makes an excellent second underwear layer.

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Like common long johns just better because of the micro pore material that wicks moisture away and keeps it out while allowing some air in to allow your body to breath.