



RITZ SAFETY

Learning Guide:

How to Customize Safety Apparel

to Keep Workers Warm and Visible





For employees who work in cold environments, a uniform is more than a form of identification and corporate branding. Uniforms protect against the cold and provide ANSI-compliant high-visibility.

There is currently no OSHA requirement that dictates the type of cold-weather clothing employers must provide to workers (29 CFR 1910.132(h)(4)). However, it is a best practice to provide workers with winter weather gear such as winter coats, jackets and gloves. Exposing workers to extremely cold weather for long periods of time puts workers at risk of physical harm, which conflicts with OSHA regulations (Section A(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970).

A report by the National Center for Health Statistics shows that winter cold kills more Americans than summer heat. Out of approximately 2,000 weather-related deaths over a 12-month period, 63 percent were caused by exposure to cold and/or hypothermia, while 31 percent were attributed to heat-related exposure, such as heat or sun stroke.

Customized Layering

Layering is still the best way to stay warm. Workers are usually most comfortable in cold weather when they wear at least three layers of loose fitting clothing – a base layer, mid-layer and outer layer. Reflective Apparel’s ANSI-Compliant 3-in-1 Layered Systems Gear is three-season customizable for comfort, safety and longevity. This provides options to adjust to temperature changes. Only having one heavy jacket means workers may be too hot with it on, but may freeze without it. If the jacket is the only ANSI-compliant apparel an employee is wearing, they are also at risk if they remove it.

Layering keeps workers warm, but it also prevents them from overheating as well. Layered Systems Gear has interchangeable parkas, jackets, and sweatshirts that can be used separately or together to increase the versatility and seasonal longevity of the safety apparel. Make sure jackets are waterproof and breathable. Anytime workers need to regulate their temperature, they can unzip and unsnap the inner coat and each jacket can be worn separately, or the whole system can be reconfigured.



Base Layer

The base layer should wick moisture away from the body and provide a light level of insulation. Sweat left on the body can cool the body too much in cold temperatures. A light- or medium-weight t-shirt made of breathable, moisture-wicking polyester mesh is recommended.

Mid-Layer

Next is the mid-layer, or inner shell. Reflective Apparel's Layered Systems Gear inner shell options include multiple fabric weights, detachable hoods, thermal fabrics, as well as water-resistant material options. The mid-layer provides added insulation and warmth, and may be a sweatshirt, hoodie or three-season jacket.

Outer Layer

The final outer layer provides protection against the elements, including water, snow and wind. Reflective Apparel's waterproof Systems Gear ANSI parkas and jackets not only provide warmth, but are also ANSI-compliant. For extreme weather conditions, employees may need something like the ANSI Class 3 compliant color blocked waterproof parka, which is lined with 3M™ Thinsulate™ Insulation, including the torso, hood and sleeves. Finish your 3-in-1 Systems Gear with matching waterproof bottoms.

The more comfortable personal protective equipment (PPE) is, the more likely employees are to wear it. Workers may fail to wear proper safety apparel if it is not comfortable.

