



National  
Operational  
Guidance

## Control measure

**Protect casualties from hypothermia  
or heat illness**



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council

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## Control measure - Protect casualties from hypothermia or heat illness

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### Control measure knowledge

Environmental exposure should be managed, using available equipment to reduce the impact on the casualty. The rescue plan should consider how the casualty can be protected from hypothermia or heat illness. For example, it may be possible to avoid removing elements of the surrounding area, such as the roof of a vehicle, to protect the casualty.

If either hypothermia or heat illness is suspected, the casualty will require medical assistance.

### Hypothermia

The effects of hypothermia can be prevented or managed by:

- Moving the casualty to a warmer environment
- If they cannot be moved indoors, providing some insulation for them to lie on
- Replacing wet clothing with dry clothes, making sure their head is covered
- Covering the casualty with blankets

### Heat illness

The effects of heat stress can be prevented or managed by:

- Moving the person to a cool environment
- Providing external cooling
- Rehydration by drinking cool, still water

Faints (syncope) may be prevented if the casualty lies down with their legs raised above the level of their head.

### Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Consider providing equipment to protect casualties from hypothermia and heat illness



## Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Protect casualties from the risk of hypothermia or heat illness
- Ensure appropriate medical assistance is requested and provided for casualties with hypothermia or heat illness