

Proper Attire for Winter on Navy and Marine Corps Flight Lines



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The winter season presents unique challenges for Navy and Marine Corps personnel working on flight lines. The combination of cold temperatures, wind chill and exposure to the elements requires careful consideration when selecting attire. Proper clothing ensures the comfort and safety of aviation professionals and maintains operational efficiency. Some essential guidelines for choosing the appropriate attire to navigate the winter months on Navy and Marine Corps flight lines follow:

Insulated Flight Suits or Coveralls

Insulated flight suits or coveralls are the foundation of winter attire on the flight line. These suits provide protection from the cold while allowing for freedom of movement. Look for suits with thermal insulation and moisture-wicking properties to keep you warm and dry during your duties.

Layering

Layering clothing is vital in regulating body temperature in fluctuating conditions. Start with a moisture-wicking base layer to keep sweat away from your skin. Add insulating layers like fleece or down jackets, and top it off with a windproof and water-resistant outer layer. This modular approach ensures adaptability throughout the day.

Gloves and Hand Protection

Keeping your hands warm and functional is crucial. Opt for gloves that provide adequate insulation without compromising dexterity. Flight gloves with touchscreen compatibility are especially useful for operating equipment and devices without exposing your hands to the cold.

Headgear

A significant amount of body heat is lost through the head, making proper headgear essential. Wear a warm and well-fitting flight helmet or cranial, along with a thermal balaclava or beanie to help retain warmth and protect against wind chill.

Footwear

Cold feet can quickly lead to discomfort and decreased performance. Insulated, moisture-wicking socks are recommended. Pair them with insulated and waterproof boots that provide traction on slippery surfaces. Ensure your footwear fits well, as tight boots can restrict blood flow and lead to cold injuries.

Eye Protection

Cold and windy conditions can cause discomfort and dryness in the eyes. Wear aviation-approved goggles or sunglasses with polarized lenses to shield your eyes from harsh winds, glare and potential debris. When wearing a helmet, ensure the clear or tinted visors are serviceable and down.

Reflective Gear

In low-light winter conditions, visibility becomes crucial. Incorporate reflective elements into your attire, such as reflective belts, flight line cranial or flight helmets with adequate reflective tape to enhance your visibility to others on the flight line, especially during early mornings or evening shifts.

Hydration and Nutrition

Staying hydrated and maintaining proper nutrition are often overlooked aspects of winter attire. Cold weather can mask the sensation of thirst, so remember to drink water regularly. Consume warm beverages and energy-rich snacks to sustain energy levels during long shifts.

Additional Accessories

Consider other accessories like hand warmers, neck gaiters and heated insoles. These small additions can significantly affect your comfort during cold days. Take breaks from the cold weather on the flight line and warm up indoors.

Safety and Operational Considerations

While staying warm is essential, ensure your attire does not compromise your safety or interfere with your ability to operate equipment. Avoid loose clothing that could get caught in machinery and adhere to all safety guidelines.

As Navy and Marine Corps personnel navigate the challenges of winter on flight lines, selecting the proper attire can be the difference between a good or bad day in the cold. A comprehensive approach that combines insulation, layering and specialized gear ensures personal comfort and the ability to perform duties effectively and safely. By prioritizing proper attire, aviation professionals can focus on the mission at hand, while safeguarding their health and well-being during the colder months. Remember, investing in the appropriate winter attire is an investment in your comfort and the success of flight line operations.



Cover: Petty Officer 1st Class Jedidiah Spencer from Marine Wing Support Squadron 373, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, observes the surrounding flight line at a forward arming refueling point (FARP) during Winter Fury at Grant County Municipal Airport, Moses Lake, Washington, Feb. 1, 2022. A FARP is a key component of expeditionary advanced base operations as it allows the Marine Corps to refuel and, rearm in a distributed environment. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Rachaelanne Woodward)