

A Touch of Frost

NORDEX UK LEADS THE WAY...

**Minus 15
Degrees C
for NORDEX
UK's
Adverse
Weather
Training
Course**

COURSE SYLLABUS

- * How to recognise and treat the symptoms of Hot and Cold weather injuries.
- * Theoretical and Practical Navigation using a Map and Compass.
- * Site emergency survival equipment.
- * Overnight navigation and survival training, including the building and use of snow-holes.

**NORDEX UK'S ADVERSE WEATHER
TRAINING COURSE, MILLENNIUM WIND FARM**

17th - 18th FEBRUARY 2010

PREPARED FOR ANY ADVERSITY

MANAGERS AND TECHNICIANS BRAVE THE ELEMENTS



Who is Joe Bellingham?

With 27 years military experience, and serving as a Trainer at Infantry Battle School, a Trainer at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst and a Training Officer at three military training schools, Joe brings his extensive experience to the role of Course Designer and Trainer.

But Joe speaks from first hand experience, as he has trained and served in adverse weather conditions worldwide, including the Balkans, South Atlantic, Africa, Central America, the Far East and Canada.

And it's all on Video...

Climber-trained Video Camera-man George Green recorded all aspects of the Training Course on Video.

Once edited, the Video will be uploaded to the Nordex UK website and will be used for Refresher Training for all staff, likely to be exposed to Adverse Weather conditions.

MINUS 15 DEGREES

As the temperature plummeted to minus 15 degrees, a group of Nordex UK staff was able to experience at first hand the true vagaries of the Scottish weather.

They were taking part in an Adverse Weather Training Course and spent the night in snow holes, which they dug into the 10-foot-deep snow drifts on the 20-turbine Millennium Wind Farm at Glenmoriston in the Scottish Highlands.

The in-house course was designed by Nordex UK's Safety Manager, Services, Joe Bellingham. And Joe also delivered the training, together with Graham Saunders - a mountaineering expert and a former Nordex UK technician.

As an employer, Nordex UK, places the health, safety and welfare of their employees as their number one priority.

After carrying out a fact-finding exercise, the company recognised the need to put into place Adverse Weather Training to give staff the necessary skills to cope with the effects of the extremes of weather on the wind-farms in the more remote and exposed locations.

The Inch Hotel, Fort Augustus was used as the training base, and staff from both the Service and Projects departments attended.

Legal

The course was very much hands-on and practical. Managers and Technicians were taken through the legal obligations with regard to site safety: their responsibility to ensure that every person on site complied with Health & Safety regulations, together with a reminder of their Duty of Care under the regulations to every person on site, including Contractors and visitors.

The biggest enemy of anyone working

on a wind farm is presented by the elements: situated in the remotest and most exposed locations, workers can experience extremes of temperatures and their effects. So the health and wellbeing of individuals was covered in depth.

Hypothermia

How to recognise and treat the symptoms of hypothermia, cold and hot weather injuries, enabled the course members to relate their experiences. And this brought a new awareness and understanding of how to apply the skills learned.

Generally, staff travel around the wind farms using 4-wheel-drive vehicles. But if a situation arises where they have to navigate on foot in blizzard conditions, they need to be adept at using a map and compass to keep them safe.

So half a day was given over to honing their navigation skills. Both the theory and practise of navigation were practised thoroughly by the course members, until they proved their competency.

And this competency was tested to the full, when they were required to navigate their way around the Millennium site during the night exercise.

This expertise enabled the participants to navigate a safe route off the wind farm to a place of safety.

Night Exercise

The course leaders walked the Millennium site the day before the course began and with just a flurry of snow, they were hard-pressed to find suitable locations where snow-holes could be dug, as the snow wasn't deep enough.

But all that was to change overnight - as the Scottish weather wreaked its vengeance.

At the hotel training base on the shore of Loch Ness, the weather gave no clue as to just how bad the overnight snow had made the conditions on the wind farm. The team was soon to find out for themselves...

The 4x4s barely made it up the first approach from the sub-station. And the Land Rover became firmly stuck in the deep snow. Only the Haglund tracked vehicle was able to pull it from its snowy grip.

Split into two groups, one led by Joe Bellingham and the other by Graham Saunders, the teams progressed on foot, as they carried out their night navigation exercise.

Wading through the knee-deep snow proved energy sapping for the teams - but, equipped with suitable cold-weather gear, they successfully navigated between key features of the site, using maps and compasses to get their bearings.

Each team member had to demonstrate his ability to identify map references and to lead the team to them accurately and safely.

Once both teams had successfully completed their night navigation, they met up where the 10-foot-high snow drifts proved ideal for them to dig their snow-holes.

And, after cooking their meals on portable primus stoves and enjoying a hot drink, the team settled down under their survival bags for the night.

But with the temperature plummeting to a bone-numbing minus 15 degrees, after 4 hours it was decided to bring the teams off the wind farm.

So at 4.30am, the teams began the 5 kilometre walk down to the vehicles and the pre-arranged rendezvous point. Then back to the sub-station for a hot drink, debrief and time to reflect on their memorable experience.

WORDS & PICTURES BY
GEORGE GREEN



Keeping snug and smiling through - despite the bitter weather...