

Hints for Photography in Inclement Conditions

Photography in extremes of weather or climate presents some challenges for the photographer. Protecting your camera is important to guaranteeing the results that we work so hard to achieve. The comfort range for cameras is from about 0° C to 36° C with low humidity. As long as your picture taking falls within this range, you should not expect problems.

Above or below this range or in humid environments, particularly where high humidity can be sustained for long periods, it is recommended to take some action to protect your camera. Here are some suggestions which can help to avoid losing your precious photographs.

When the light level is very bright, we recommend the use of a polarizing filter or a neutral density filter. This is true in both summer and winter.

For your SLR camera, don't change lenses unless really necessary, this will increase the exposure to dust or grit, especially in windy or dusty environments. If you bring your camera to the beach, make absolutely sure that it does not get any sand on it. For this location, it is advisable to use a single-use camera.

Never leave your camera in a car in the summer, especially if it is in direct sun. It is possible for the temperature inside a car to reach above 50° C very quickly.

Winter Shooting Tips

Winter camera problems such as frozen LCD display, memory card, film and batteries, static discharge and moisture condensation are quite common. Some people will recommend to protect your camera by keeping it inside your jacket. Keep in mind that the camera will be subjected to body moisture and static discharge associated with vigorous winter activities.

For digital camera users, the memory card must be handled with care. Allow plenty of time for your camera to warm up after returning indoors. Always turn off the camera before removing the memory card. "Grounding" yourself before touching the memory card is a good safe practice to avoid static discharge to the card. In any conditions, remember to allow enough time for your digital camera to complete writing the image to the memory card before turning the camera off.

For film users, the film is the most vulnerable component. A film will not be harmed by being frozen but when a film is cold, it is brittle and will attract condensation and static discharge. Cameras with motor drive advance or rewind actually move the film at a rapid pace which can cause static discharge. Place the camera in a pocket or pouch where it is less likely to be jostled about.

Generally, an LCD display or a battery will not be harmed by being frozen. As long as the battery is not frozen, the camera will continue to function but you won't be able to read the display. With normal outdoor light, this should not result in improperly exposed pictures.

If your camera uses a rechargeable battery, it is possible to remove the battery from the camera and carry it in a pocket close to your body for warmth. As long as the battery does not contact metal surfaces, there is no chance that it will leak and it will work the camera when needed. It is possible that the frame counter will lose its count so you may have to keep track of the number of pictures taken.

Most importantly, carry a re-closeable plastic bag to place the camera into before returning indoors. This will dramatically reduce the chances for moisture to condense on the camera and film surfaces. It will take 20 - 30 minutes for the camera to be warm enough to be removed from the bag.

Photography in High Humidity Conditions

High humidity and warm temperatures will present challenging conditions for the photographer. Again, moisture condensation is the condition to avoid. There are still precautions which one can take to protect

your camera. If you can store inside air-conditioned area will be ideal but if not, keep your camera low to the ground where the temperature may be slightly cooler. If it is practical, carry a dessicant such as silica gel but to make proper use, you should store inside a re-sealable container.

In high humidity, it is a good practice to clean your camera often using an absorbent soft cloth, especially when it is getting a lot of handling. This will remove any residue that may attract moisture. Don't use the same cloth over and over as this will negate the advantage of cleaning the camera. Never allow your camera to be exposed to direct sunlight or high heat for prolonged periods. Remove batteries when storing the camera for extended periods.

If you are using sun-screen, wash your hands thoroughly before touching the camera.

Please bear in mind that since conditions and use can vary widely, these suggestions are meant to generate awareness of the problems associated with extreme conditions and are guidelines only. Experience and common sense are the best tools at your disposal. Do not hesitate to ask our staff for assistance at any time.

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