

Hints for Photography in Inclement Conditions

Photography in extremes of weather or climate presents some challenges for the photographer. Protecting camera and film are important to guaranteeing the results that we work so hard to achieve. The comfort range for cameras and film are 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 camera and film. Here are some suggestions which can help to avoid disappointment when your films are returned from processing.

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.

Winter Shooting Tips

Winter camera problems such as frozen LCD display, 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.

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 lithium 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. Remember, though, that the frame counter will probably lose its count so you will have to keep track of the number of pictures taken.

Most importantly, carry a recloseable 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.

This article was written for film cameras but the general ideas still apply. 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.