

Ultra-light fabrics replace deadly oil skins

If the freak Antarctic incident had happened today it is unlikely the two adventurers would have died.

The Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) now uses clothes with ultra-light fabrics and heat retaining abilities to protect people working in extreme cold.

The layering principle is used to ensure soft warm clothing is worn next to the skin, then a layer of thermal insulation and a top coat with waterproof properties.



PHOTO: [An aviation crew wearing layered protective gear provided by the Australian Antarctic Division.](#) (© Nick Watt/Australian Antarctic Division)

Roger Knowles from AAD Supply Services says the heavy oil skins popular in the past have been abandoned.

"The rule of thumb for living in a cold environment is to get lots of insulation between you and the environment and to remove that insulation layer-by-layer when you get warmer," he said.

"You need a clothing system that allows you to shed layers quickly and easily before you get damp from perspiration.

"Several thinner garments will serve this purpose better than one bulky overcoat."

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