

Winter injury prevention strategies

Skiing, snowboarding, and making snow angels are fun winter activities, but the season carries its share of hazards. Navigating around in snow and ice can cause injuries from slips and falls on sidewalks or car wrecks from sliding on ice. This handout provides some ideas for what businesses can do to prepare for winter.

The workplace

- Establish an inclement weather policy
- Designate a spokesperson/weather watcher
- Create a snow removal plan (who, when, how)
- Consider shovel selection (lighter is better)
- Remove rooftop snow (if any)—identify access and fall protection measures
- Address drips and ice, specifically around entryways
- Consider spreading ice melt for early arrivals
- Establish designated paths for inclement conditions and focus primary ice/snow control efforts on those areas
- Ensure all designated pathways are well lit
- Use appropriate mats outside and inside of building at all main access/egress points. Remember, no gaps at doorways!
- Place ice melt buckets at all main access/egress points. Consider playground sand as an alternative for sensitive surfaces
- Consider ice alerts (icealert.com) to alert employees and patrons of icy conditions
- Insure a formal hazard/incident reporting system is in place
- Consider sitting stations at main entrances to allow employees to change shoes/shoe chains
- Create a safety policy on space heaters

The person

- Provide training and education on winter safety (brochures, stuffers, tailgate meetings)

- Communicate "Walk like a penguin" messages
- Establish a footwear policy
- Consider subsidizing shoe chain use and/or shoe chain stations
- Establish safe shoveling guidelines
- Encourage employees to dress to be warm and seen
- Provide workers with resources to develop a family communication plan for emergencies

The rig

- Inclement weather travel policy (method of communication, designated communicator)
- Minimum safety requirements for vehicles
- Inspection procedures and checklists
- Emergency kit (establish required contents)
- Clear windows and lights
- Chaining up—policy and training

Resources

SAIF: Slips, trips, and falls
saif.com/falls

CDC: Be Prepared to Stay Safe and Healthy in Winter
<https://www.cdc.gov/features/winterweather/index.html>

NSC: Winter Safety
<https://www.nsc.org/home-safety/tools-resources/seasonal-safety/winter>

FEMA: Winter Storms & Extreme Cold
https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/8a3791d53642aa08eb41a705e3c505b5/FEMA_FS_winterstorm_508.pdf

IceAlert Temperature Sensitive Indicators
<https://www.icealert.com/>