

Winter time, slips, trips and falls



Winter weather and slippery conditions are here. Walking on snow and ice covered sidewalks, parking lots, and work sites cause a substantial number of falls for workers and pedestrians. It is important to avoid routine behaviors and to be on guard for changing conditions and hazards. Wet or icy surfaces, uneven pavement, snow covered hazards, glare, and poor visibility all increase the risk for falls and injury. A minor fall may only result in bruised pride, however the potential is always there for serious injuries, such as broken bones or even fatal injuries.

Remember to:

- Wear proper footwear. A boot with good rubber treads is recommended. Consider good shoes to get you inside before switching to dress shoes.
- Walk slowly and deliberately. Tap your foot on possible slippery areas to gauge the level of slickness or better yet, avoid those conditions. Proceed with caution.
- Walk flat footed, knees slightly bent, to keep your center of balance over your body.
- Watch out for black ice. Scan your walk area and look for hazards.
- Be extra careful coming into a building with wet shoes. Wipe your feet and walk slowly.
- Exercise caution when getting in and out of vehicles.
- If possible, avoid carrying items in your hands, or keeping your hands in your pockets in case you need to catch yourself if you lose your balance.

If you find yourself falling backwards, try to tuck your chin so you don't hit your head, and try to relax your muscles. Tension in your body can cause additional injury.



Additional Fall Prevention Tips



Maintain contact with all handrails. Keep your hands free to offer stability, and to catch yourself if needed.

Avoid climbing stairs or ladders with objects in your hands. Always maintain three points of contact.

Keep walk and work surfaces clean and clutter free. Scan your walkway for existing and potential hazards.

Wet surfaces should be protected by proper drainage or appropriate matting to dry shoes.

Provide warning signs or high visibility paint to signify uneven surfaces and trip hazards.

Wear shoes that provide good traction and offer slip resistance.

Limit your load to what you can safely handle to allow an unobstructed view of your path. Use wheels to push or pull your load if possible.

Alert others when you see a slip, trip or fall hazard. If you cannot fix the hazard immediately, make a timely notification or Near Miss Report that could save a friend, co-worker, or family member from having a serious accident.

Never walk by a hazard without doing something about it or notifying the proper person!