

SAFETY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

SAFETY BREAKS

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

LOCATION: _____

YOUR SAFETY CONCERNS: _____

DISCUSSION LEADER: _____

Preventing Falls Due to Ice and Snow

Winter is fast approaching—and along with it, the hazards of slips and falls due to slippery surfaces. Slips and falls usually rate near the top as causes for workplace injury, accounting for almost 17% of all workplace fatalities in 2014. Understanding this, prevention of slips and falls should always be a priority.

Snow and ice are often thought of as forces beyond human control, but their hazards can be minimized through the implementation of effective policies and preventive measures.

Management Responsibility

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Management, however, must provide the guidance, training, and materials in order to ensure that employees can exercise safe practices. When developing procedures to deal with snow and ice, the following guidelines should be followed.

Before the winter weather:

- Assign responsibility. It has been said that "when it's everyone's job, it's no one's job." Certain personnel should be assigned the tasks of monitoring weather conditions, regularly checking and clearing walking surfaces, and ensuring that supplies (salt, sand, etc.) are available. As these employees have other duties, ensure that they are given the latitude to attend to safety duties as required.
- Purchase stocks of sand/salt ahead of time and keep plenty on hand.
- Assess the walking areas around the facility. Pay close attention to sloped areas, stairs, and areas around downspouts. Hazardous areas can be made safer by re-routing traffic, re-directing flow from downspouts, introducing handrails, etc.
- Inconvenient tasks often don't get done. Stage equipment and supplies where they will be convenient to use. Shovels and scrapers should be kept ready for use. Salt/sand containers should be kept by doorways and a means to spread them (cup, scoop, etc.) should be kept nearby.
- Conduct winter weather safety training for all employees.
- Provide footwear traction aids for those working in slippery conditions, and mandate their use.

When winter weather hits:

- Ensure that areas are cleared of snow and ice before employees go to walk on them. Packed snow is harder to remove than fresh.

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- Pinpoint high-traffic times (shift changes, lunches, breaks) and ensure that walkways are cleaned just before.
- Salting an area prior to snowfall can make it easier to remove the snow and ice.
- Ensure that adequate handholds/grab bars are provided on equipment like forklifts and trucks. Emphasize safe mounting and dismounting.
- Conduct boot checks to ensure good traction. Consider plans to help employees purchase quality footwear (boot trucks, payroll deduction, reimbursement, etc.).

Employee Responsibility

Safety is everyone's job. Employees should be on the lookout for slip-and-fall hazards. If found, each employee is responsible for correcting these hazards or informing someone who can do so. Slippery surfaces do not discriminate; the next person to fall or be injured could be you or a friend.

- If you see slippery conditions, act—spread some salt, shovel the snow, and/or inform a manager. Don't leave the hazard for the next guy.
- Wear high traction footwear. If dress/athletic shoes are necessary, consider carrying them while wearing proper footwear to walk in hazard areas.
- Don't keep your hands in your pockets when walking outside. If your arms are out, you will have better balance if you should slip.
- Look at the ground ahead of you (not at your phone) to spot any icy patches.
- If you must walk on ice, keep as much of your shoe in contact with the ice as you can and take small, shuffling steps.
- Keep your weight slightly forward in order to prevent falling backwards
- Report all work-related falls. Even if the fall seems less than serious, immediate reporting will allow the hazardous condition to be addressed quickly and may prevent another fall. Falls that seem insignificant and the conditions that cause them may turn more serious if not attended to.

If you have to walk on ice, what is the best way to do so?

Where are some high-hazard areas (for slips and falls) at this facility?

What is the safest way to mount or dismount a forklift or truck in hazardous winter conditions?
