

Walking Safely in Slippery Conditions

Walking to and from parking lots or between buildings at work during the winter requires special attention to avoid slipping and falling. Slips and falls are some of the most frequent types of injuries that occur during the winter months.

No matter how well the snow and ice is removed from parking lots and sidewalks, pedestrians will still encounter some slippery surfaces when walking outdoors in the winter. It is important for everyone to be constantly aware of these dangers and to learn to walk safely on ice and slippery surfaces.

It is recommended to keep these important safety tips in mind:

Choosing Appropriate Clothing

- During bad weather, avoid boots or shoes with smooth soles and heels, such as plastic and leather soles. Instead, wear shoes or boots that provide traction on snow and ice; boots made of non-slip rubber or neoprene with grooved soles are best.
- Wear a heavy, bulky coat that will cushion you if you should fall.
- Wear a bright scarf or hat or reflective gear so drivers can see you.
- Keep warm, but make sure you can hear what's going on around you.
- During the day, wear sunglasses to help you see better and avoid hazards.
- Whatever you wear, make sure it doesn't block your vision or make it hard for you to hear traffic.

Walking Over Ice

- In cold temperatures, approach with caution and assume that all wet, dark areas on pavements are slippery and icy. Dew or water vapor can freeze on cold surfaces, forming an extra-thin, nearly invisible layer of ice that can look like a wet spot on the pavement.
- Walk in designated walkways as much as possible. Taking shortcuts over snow piles and other frozen areas can be hazardous. Look ahead when you walk; a snow- or ice-covered sidewalk or driveway, especially if on a hill, may require travel along its grassy edge for traction.
- Taking shortcuts through areas where snow and ice removal is not feasible can be hazardous.
- Bend slightly and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible.
- Extend your arms out to your sides to maintain balance. Beware if you are carrying a heavy backpack or other load—your sense of balance will be off.
- If you must carry a load, try not to carry too much; leave your hands and arms free to balance yourself.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets. Hands out of your pockets while walking lowers your center of gravity and increases balance. You can help break your fall with your hands free if you do start to slip.
- Watch where you are stepping and GO S-L-O-W-L-Y !! This will help your reaction time to changes in traction.
- When walking on steps always use the hand railings and plant your feet firmly on each step.
- Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles; use the vehicle for support.
- Take short steps or shuffle for stability. It also helps to stop occasionally to break momentum.