

Winter Safety

Two big concerns of working or simply spending time outdoors in cold weather are frostbite and hypothermia. Slips, Trips and Falls is the number one reason for industrial injuries in the United States.

What is Frostbite?

Frostbite is an injury to the body that is caused by freezing. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and color in the affected areas. It most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes. Frostbite can permanently damage body tissues. Severe cases can lead to amputation.

Symptoms: Reduced blood flow to the hands and feet, numbness, tingling and stinging, aching, and white, waxy, or bluish skin.

It is of the utmost importance to be aware of Frostbite and look for the warning signs. Wear plenty of warm clothing and take breaks inside.

First Aid: Get into a warm room as soon as possible. Immerse the affected area in warm, not hot, water (the temperature should be comfortable to the touch for unaffected parts of the body) or use body heat without rubbing the area. If sensation does not return to the affected body part(s) or signs of frost bite are still visible, then treatment by a doctor is required.



Winter Slip, Trips, & Falls

During the winter, slips become far more prevalent. Areas with ice and snow build-up can be outright dangerous. To avoid injury it is important to avoid ice and snow.



Safety Tips

- Avoid problem areas where ice and snow commonly build-up.
- Walk like a duck, if you must walk on ice do so with your toes pointed outward.
- Take pathways that have been cleared and de-iced.
- Wear shoes with adequate tread.
- Most importantly contact building or ground maintenance about ice and snow build-up in areas commonly traveled by employees and customers. It is every-one's job to identify slip hazards!

Snow Removal & Shoveling

Snow removal can be hard work, but it is an important part of keeping everyone safe

at the job. The last thing anyone wants is for someone to get hurt clearing snow and ice.

Follow these simple tips to stay safe:

- Dress warmly. Paying special attention to feet, hands, nose, and ears.
- Avoid shoveling snow if you are out of shape. If you have a history of heart trouble, do not shovel unless your doctor says it is ok.
- If possible, push snow in front of you. If you have to lift it, pick up small amounts and lift with your legs, not your back. Do not toss snow over your shoulder or to the side.
- Do light warm-up exercises before shoveling and take frequent breaks.
- Don't drink alcohol before or while shoveling snow. Never smoke while shoveling.
- Use rock salt or de-icing compounds to remove ice from steps, walkways, and sidewalks. Spreading sand on walkways may also improve traction and help prevent slipping.
- Treads are not enough to prevent falls on solid ice. Traction enhancing devices such as Crampons or Yak-Tracks are more effective in providing traction and preventing slips, trips, and falls. It's like tires on a car. Even with fresh treads, you can still slide on black ice. It's a lot less likely with chains on.
- Ensure that collected snow and ice does not build up and block emergency exits.



Snow Blowers and Throwers

If you use a snow blower (also called a snow thrower), follow these safety guidelines:

- Read the owner's manual before starting your snow blower. Make sure you understand how to properly operate the equipment.
- Make sure all people and pets are out of the way before you begin.
- Do not put your hand in the snow blower to remove impacted snow or debris. Turn the machine off and use Lockout/Tagout to prevent accidental start up.
- Do not leave the snow blower unattended when it is running.
- Fill up with fuel before you start, when the engine is cool.



Safety Toolbox Quiz - Winter Safety

Name (Print) _____

Company Name _____

Name (Sign) _____

Date _____ Department _____

1. If you have a history of heart problems, consult a Doctor prior to shoveling as part of your work duties.
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. If a snow blower (or thrower) has built up snow or debris preventing it from working, you should remove the blockage with your hand, with the equipment running.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. Reduced blood flow to the hands and feet, numbness, tingling and stinging, aching, and white, waxy, or bluish skin are the symptoms of the following:
 - a. Boredom
 - b. Frost Bite
 - c. Hepatitis B
 - d. Heat Stroke