



How to Prevent Winter Slip and Fall Injuries at Your Workplace

When things get icy, employees are at a great risk of slips and falls. This puts an employer at an increased risk of an on-the-job injury. Even if your state doesn't get a lot of snow or ice, it's best to be prepared. Some people aren't sure what to do even in a small amount of snow.

According to [OSHA](#)¹, slips, trips and falls account for the majority of general industry accidents, and 15% of all accidental deaths. They are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of fatalities.

During cold weather months, employers should take some basic precautions to prevent possible accidents. There are seven important things you can do to help reduce the risk of slip and fall injuries in the winter.

1. Get some basic supplies.

Even if you live in a warm climate, it is important to have some basic materials to prevent, treat, or break up ice: such as shovels; scrapers; sand; kitty litter; or salt.

2. Clear away hazards as soon as they happen.

Regularly clearing the sidewalks, parking lot, walkways, and building entrances is crucial to maintaining a safe environment. Make sure to take these steps before your employees arrive at work, so the ice has time to melt. Pay special attention to stairs and uneven concrete, where the potential for accidents is higher.

3. Encourage your employees to wear safe shoes.

Footwear with slick soles or low tread can be dangerous during the wintertime. High-heeled shoes are especially a problem because they are unstable. Let your employees know the importance of proper footwear during the winter. Traction cleats such as Yaktrax® are a great way to help keep your workers safe. These cleats can be stretched over shoes and boots to help dig into slick surfaces.

4. Recommend the “penguin walk.”

The penguin walk, or shuffle, is a way of moving that helps prevent falls on slippery surfaces. Walk slowly with eyes forward, knees slightly bent, and take small steps. Focus on the surface ahead of you, spread out your arms for balance if you start to lose your balance, and avoid crossing your legs.

5. Post warning signs.

Post signs about the dangers of snow and ice in appropriate areas. It's a simple solution that will help people focus on safety.

6. Teach the proper way to fall.

When falling, it is important to try to relax your muscles. This technique will lessen the impact on your body. Try to tuck your chin in, to avoid hitting your skull against the pavement. Knowing the proper way to fall could save a life.

7. Stay up to date with weather forecasts.

Have a good idea of what's coming, so you can accurately prepare and broadcast weather information to your workforce.

These seven steps could help prevent one of the most common and sometimes deadly workplace accidents that occur every year.