

Winter Weather Employee Safety

A safety guide for employers and employees to prevent workplace injuries in winter weather.

Safety Guides:

1. Setting up a Winter Weather Protocol
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Basics of a Setting Up a Winter Weather Protocol

Winter weather can increase the likelihood of the most-frequent claim causing injury: slips, trips, and falls. One of the first steps to promote safety during inclement weather is establishing a Winter Weather Protocol.

To establish a Winter Weather Protocol, it is important to take note of prior hazards encountered in poor weather, utilize your regular maintenance routine, and follow the tips below. If you have a protocol in place, great! Take a look below to review!

1. Coordinate

Schedule your snow removal before your employees arrive. Removal should begin at no more than 1/2 inch of accumulation. The sooner you can start snow removal the better!

3. Inspect

Snow is both an indoor and outdoor hazard. It can be tracked inside and create wet areas in your business. Stay in front of all hazards by performing constant inspections of your entire property. All too often, injuries can occur from the snow that has been removed from the walkway but melted and refroze in the path of travel.

80% of all slips, trips, and falls from ice and snow occur in parking lots, with 50% happening between 6 AM and 12 PM.

2. Designate

Snow piles can make navigation difficult. Establish and indicate a path of travel with markers, such as cones, to provide a safe entrance and exit from your establishment for employees and clients.

4. Maintain

After initial snow removal, keep up a regular snow maintenance routine, in addition to your everyday routine. Do not disregard any of the steps of your daily maintenance protocol. Check-in with your staff, or manager to confirm no regular maintenance tasks are being sidelined.

Your winter weather protocol will only work if you, your staff, and all protocols are in harmony!

Prepare & Prevent Against

Cold Illnesses

Employees working in winter weather become susceptible to cold illnesses such as hypothermia and frostbite as temperatures start to drop and wind picks up. Use the tips below to help prevent a possible cold illness and beat the frosty weather this year!

Protective Clothing

- ❄️ The best way to prevent a cold-illness is to bundle up
- ❄️ Wear a hat, insulated boots, and gloves
- ❄️ Wear at least three layers of clothing
- ❄️ Do not wear tight clothing that can restrict blood flow
- ❄️ If you get hot, open your jacket but keep gloves and hat on

Stay Dry

- ❄️ Moisture or dampness, (even from sweating) can increase the rate of heat loss from the body
- ❄️ Keep a change of dry clothes available if clothes become wet

Stay Hydrated

- ❄️ Drink plenty of liquids and avoid caffeine & alcohol as it is easy to become dehydrated in the cold

Buddy System

- ❄️ Work in pairs to keep an eye on each other and watch for signs of cold stress

Work Schedule

- ❄️ If possible, try to work during the warmer hours of the day, and take breaks when it is especially cold



Snow Blower Safety Tips

Avoid Fumes

Do not start the snowblower indoors, even if the door is open. Gas-powered equipment will produce dangerous carbon monoxide and must be started in a well-ventilated area.

Wear Hearing Protection

Gas-powered equipment is loud and can cause hearing damage.

Avoid Loose Clothing

Avoid wearing loose clothing that can get caught in any moving parts of the snowblower.

Direct the Snow

Direct the chute, where the snow shoots out of, so that it won't cause any damage or injuries to others around you!

Clear the Area

Before the snow gets too deep, remove doormats, sleds, boards, wires, newspapers, and anything else from the area to avoid clogs and damage to the machine.*Pro Tip* Be proactive in clearing the area... remove any objects before the snow begins!

If your snow blower gets clogged, follow these tips

1. Make sure the engine is off.
2. Make sure the auger and impeller are stopped before clearing the clog .
3. Use a clearing tool or stick to clean out snow and ice.

Many snowblowers have a clearing tool mounted somewhere on the machine.

4. Do not place your hands or feet inside the machine to clear anything, even if the machine is stopped.

There could be residual energy released after clearing and this energy can cause parts to move to result in severe injuries.

Safety Tips When Shoveling Snow



Stay hydrated as the combo of exertion & cold dry air will dehydrate you quickly



Wear layers - as you warm up you can remove a layer & maintain a comfortable body temperature



Take it slow to start and take frequent breaks



Do not work to the point of exhaustion



Do not shovel after eating or while smoking



Know the signs of a heart attack, and stop immediately and call 911 if you're experiencing any of them; every minute counts



Warm-up and stretch out before you begin



Use an ergonomically designed shovel to reduce bending



Shovel multiple times so you don't have extremely deep snow to remove at the end.



Lift with your legs, not your back



Push the snow rather than lifting it. If you do lift, use a small shovel or only partially fill the shovel



Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it's lighter