

During Winter Give Falls "the Slip"



Courtesy of the Risk Management Division

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 - especially during the winter months.

Think prevention

In cold temperatures, approach with caution and assume that all wet, dark areas on pavements are slippery and icy.

Walking safety on ice and snow

- 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.
 - o 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 in your pockets while walking decreases your center of gravity and 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.
- Use extra care when getting in and out of vehicles; parking lots are particularly difficult to maintain between parked vehicles.
- Walk on designated walkways
- Walk like a Penguin. Point your feet out slightly like a penguin! Spreading your feet out slightly while walking on ice increases your center of gravity.
- Bend slightly and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible.

Dealing with Traffic

Another hazard of walking on icy ground is dealing with poor road conditions. Keep these safety tips in mind if you're going to be crossing the street:

- Before stepping off the curb, make sure all cars and trucks have come to a complete stop. Motorists sometimes underestimate the time it takes to stop, often unintentionally sliding into the crosswalk.
- Due to poor road conditions, motorists may not be able to stop or slow down for pedestrians. Avoid crossing in areas where driver visibility is low—the cross traffic may not be able to stop in time.
- Be on the lookout for vehicles sliding in your direction.
- Vehicles should yield to snow removal equipment in streets and parking lots.

Indoor Safety

Walking over a slippery floor can be just as dangerous as walking over ice! Keep these tips in mind if you are entering a building:

- Remove as much snow and water from your boots as you can. Water from melting ice on the floor can lead to slippery conditions.
- Notice that floors and stairs may be wet and slippery—walk carefully especially by outer doors.

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.

If You Should Fall

- Try to avoid landing on your knees, wrists, or spine. Try to fall on a fleshy part of your body, such as your side. Wearing thick clothing can help prevent injury to the bony parts of your body.
- Try to relax your muscles if you fall. You'll injure yourself less if you are relaxed.

If you fall backward, make a conscious effort to tuck your chin so your head won't hit the ground with full force.

Please remember to report all injuries to the Risk Management office at 530-886-2600. Our fax number is 530-886-2609.