

Start-up for Safety

Slips & Falls in Wet, Snow & Ice Conditions

Background

While many safety efforts focus on driving in wet, snowy, and/or icy conditions, walking in these conditions results in almost as many accidents. Some of these accidents are very serious. Slips, trips, and falls cause 10 percent of all accidental deaths and rank fourth, following motor vehicles, homicides, and being struck by objects or equipment as a cause of fatalities.

This safety topic provides some tips on preventing slip, trip and fall injuries when walking or working in wet, snowy, and/or icy conditions.

Slip & Fall Prevention Tips

- Be sure to plow, shovel and apply ice melt on walking paths and parking lots initially when a weather event occurs and periodically thereafter as needed.
- Provide cleated shoe covers when working outdoors in snowy/icy conditions (e.g., during snow removal). A number of vendors sell this type of footwear.
- Clean up spills and standing liquids in corridors and walking paths as soon as possible.
- When immediate cleanup of spills and standing liquids is not possible, place three-foot high “wet floor” signs or cones in the pathway to call attention to the hazard.
- Install slip-resistant flooring material such as textured, serrated, or punched surfaces and steel grating on walking paths, especially steps and ramps. These types of floor surfaces are good for wet, oily, or dirty operations.
- Provide absorbents to clean up where oily materials or corrosive liquids are accidentally spilled.
- Provide slip-resistant mats at entrances, around equipment, and in aisles and bathrooms where contaminants such as spills, rainwater, and dirt are probable.
- Provide rated, slip-resistant shoes or shoe covers to employees. Just because a shoe has a rubber sole does not mean that it is slip-resistant. Rated slip-resistant footwear will be labeled as such.

Conclusion

While you may not be able to eliminate all slippery conditions at your workplace, there are practical measures that you can take to reduce the potential for slip-related injuries. When it comes to these tips, get a grip so you can avoid the slip!

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