

# Don't trip into winter

## Hazards and controls

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### What are winter trip hazards and what can you do?

During the winter, ice and snow can make it difficult to see, create uneven surfaces and reduce traction.

Trips can occur when workers move between inside and outdoor workspaces. The transition between floor surfaces can create tripping hazards, such as carpets, tile, concrete, entry mats and metal doorframes.

To reduce the risk of trips indoors, you should:

- Clean walking areas and floors of snow or water.
- Use signage.
- Lay mats flat and, where possible, secure them to the floor.
- Ensure that metal doorframes leading outdoors are free of frost or ice buildup.

Changing temperatures and weather conditions can lead to inconsistent surfaces and potentially increase the risk of tripping.

Trails used through worksites during summer months or as shortcuts may no longer be safe to use in the winter.

To reduce the risk of trips outdoors, you should:

- Use cleared walkways to avoid paths and trails covered with snow.
- Keep sidewalks, parking lots and other walking surfaces clear.
- Sanding and shoveling walkways.
- Use signage to identify potential tripping hazards.
- Apply traction devices on surfaces that are not skid resistant, such as loading docks, gangplanks and ramps.
- Ensure pathways are well lit.

- Use appropriate personal protective equipment and footwear.

Most important, pay attention when you are walking.

### Be aware

To prevent trips, workers should:

- Pay attention
- Wear proper footwear
- keep walking and working surfaces clear
- eliminate abrupt changes in walking surface height, and
- watch for transitions getting on and off equipment and between work spaces.

### Footwear

Wearing proper footwear can prevent trips and injuries. When working outdoors it is important to wear the right footwear, this could include:

- Cleats. It is important to remove when entering a building as it can cause a trip.
- Winter footwear with good traction. Footwear with traction should be worn when working or walking to work and through parking lots.

## How to reduce the risks of trips:

Everyone has the responsibility to reduce the risk of trips.

### Supervisors and employers should:

- Prepare a winter maintenance plan. Include indoor and outdoor activities like snow removal and cleaning floors.
- Consider the history of changes in the worksite. Does ice build up in predictable places? Where does snow melt when coming indoors?
- Prepare equipment and supplies (e.g. ice melter) in advance of the change in the seasons.
- Provide warning signs for slip, trip and fall hazards.
- Review your company's incidents and potentially serious incidents and discuss with workers to mitigate in the coming season. Discuss and share stories of tripping injuries or near misses on your work sites.
- Discuss hazards with workers at meetings.
- Empower workers to take the time needed to walk carefully around the worksite.

### Workers should:

- Wear appropriate footwear.
- Avoid distracted walking. Stay focused moving through the worksite, especially in transition areas (e.g. doorways, on/off equipment).
- Be aware of hazards that change through the day (e.g. where ice melts or re-freezes) leading to uneven surfaces.
- When you identify a trouble spot, try to remedy the issue immediately (e.g. apply ice melt to ice) and report it to your supervisor.

- 'Walk like a penguin' – move slowly, take small steps, keep your hands free and keep your feet under your body when on unknown surfaces.
- Use traction aids and take time to move safely around the work site and your vehicle.
- Maintain three-point contact when getting in and out of vehicles.
- If you do slip, trip or fall, do not be embarrassed – report the incident to your supervisor.

### Shop talk

- Review daily/weekly changing conditions and how they impact the different work surfaces.
- Inspect your work place for trip hazards.
- Ask what can be prepared in the fall to reduce chances of trips through the winter?
- Discuss with workers what can be done to prevent a trip, and challenge workers to find other ways to prevent trips.

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