

# Preventing Winter Slips & Falls



It's that time of year where slips and falls occur at an increasing number. No matter how well the snow and ice are removed from parking lots and sidewalks, employees will encounter some slippery surfaces when walking outdoors in the winter. Each year, employees are injured from slips and falls. It is important to be continually aware of the dangers and to walk safely on ice and slippery surfaces.

## ***How to Prevent Winter Slips & Falls***

- Wear shoes or boots that provide traction on snow and ice. Avoid high heels and shoes without treads.
- Use walkways that have been shoveled and sanded or salted, if possible. Walk around snow piles.
- Keep both hands free for balance, rather than in your pockets.
- Use handrails from start to finish, where available.
- Avoid carrying loads on stairs; or carry loads that you can see over.
- Look ahead when you walk.
- Test potentially slick areas by tapping your foot on them.
- Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles; use the vehicle for support.



## ***When given no choice but to walk on ice, consider the following:***

- Take short steps or shuffle for stability.
- Bend slightly; walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet.
- Be prepared to fall.
- If you fall, fall with sequential contacts at your thigh, hip, and shoulder to avoid using your arms to protect against breakage. Try to twist and roll backwards, rather than falling forward.
- Bend your back and head forward so you won't slam your head on the pavement.
- Relax as much as possible when you begin to fall.
- Toss the load you are carrying. Protect yourself instead of the objects being carried.



## ***Finally, when entering buildings:***

- Use mats to remove moisture from footwear to prevent creating wet, slippery conditions indoors.
- Keep mats positioned in front of outside doors.
- When slippery spots are encountered, sprinkle salt on the area, or notify facility personnel.