



Preparing for Winter Hazards – Slip and Fall Prevention

Winter brings unique workplace challenges that can increase the risk of slips, trips, and falls if the workplace is not prepared in advance. Taking proactive measures before the cold weather arrives ensures employees have the tools, equipment, and awareness needed to work safely all season long.

Snow and Ice Control

- Ensure snow shovels and ice scrapers are readily available at all entrances, sidewalks, and parking lots.
- Stock up on ice melt, sand, or salt before the first storm. Store materials in sealed, accessible containers.
- Confirm snow plowing contracts/services are arranged, or ensure in-house equipment (plows, snow blowers, spreaders) is serviced and ready.
- Inspect company vehicles with snowplows – confirm blades are installed properly and vehicles are stocked with ice melt, warning triangles, and emergency supplies.



Walkways and Parking Areas

- Identify all high-traffic walkways, stairs, and ramps that need regular clearing and salting.
- Install handrails where needed and inspect existing ones for sturdiness.
- Place non-slip mats at entrances and rotate them as they become saturated.
- Verify outdoor lighting is functioning to improve visibility during dark winter mornings and evenings.

Indoor Housekeeping

- Stock housekeeping supplies for wet conditions (mops, buckets, absorbent mats, “wet floor” signs).
- Install or refresh entryway matting systems to capture snow and water before it spreads inside.
- Schedule routine checks during shifts to clean tracked-in water and slush.
- Assign responsibility for monitoring entrances during peak times (shift changes, breaks, start of day).

Employee Preparedness

- Require proper footwear with non-slip soles; encourage the use of ice cleats or traction aids when walking outdoors.
- Remind employees to change footwear when indoors to reduce water accumulation from snow boots.
- Provide training on the “penguin walk” (short steps, flat-footed, arms out for balance) to reduce slip risk.
- Ensure employees wear high-visibility outerwear when working in parking lots or near plowing operations.



Emergency and Communication Readiness

- Update the company’s winter emergency response plan (including inclement weather closures, early dismissals, or late starts).
- Test communication systems (call trees, text alerts, emails) to ensure employees are notified promptly of severe weather.
- Verify first aid kits, flashlights, and emergency kits are fully stocked and accessible.
- Train employees on reporting hazardous conditions immediately to supervisors.



Ongoing Maintenance During Winter

- Assign a responsible team (or contractor) for daily snow and ice inspections of outdoor surfaces.
- Document all snow removal, salting, and housekeeping activities for liability protection.
- Inspect roofs for snow accumulation and arrange safe snow removal procedures if necessary.
- Rotate mats, replace worn treads, and maintain good housekeeping throughout the season.

Safety Reminder

Slips, trips, and falls are one of the leading causes of workplace injuries in winter. Preparation is the key to prevention. By planning ahead, stocking supplies, and training employees, your company can ensure a safe and productive winter season.





Quiz: Winter Readiness – Slip and Fall Prevention

1. Why is it important to stock ice melt and sand before the first snowstorm?
 - A. To save money on bulk orders
 - B. To ensure materials are ready when needed and prevent slippery surfaces
 - C. To keep them in storage until summer
 - D. Because OSHA requires a minimum supply
2. Which of the following is the safest indoor practice to reduce tracked-in water?
 - A. Using decorative rugs at entryways
 - B. Installing non-slip mats and cleaning them regularly
 - C. Leaving floors wet and warning employees to be careful
 - D. Allowing employees to wipe shoes on their pants
3. What is the purpose of providing employees with ice cleats or traction aids?
 - A. To make walking faster in snow
 - B. To improve grip and reduce slips on icy surfaces
 - C. To keep their shoes clean
 - D. To prevent snow from melting indoors
4. Which preparation should be done for company vehicles used in winter?
 - A. Store them away until spring
 - B. Fill with sand and ice melt, check plow installation, and stock emergency kits
 - C. Wash them daily
 - D. Park them far away from entrances
5. What is the 'penguin walk' method?
 - A. Walking quickly to stay warm
 - B. Taking short steps, keeping feet flat, and using arms for balance
 - C. Keeping hands in pockets while walking
 - D. Walking only on toes to avoid snow



Answer Key: Winter Readiness – Slip and Fall Prevention

1. B – Ensure materials are ready and prevent slippery surfaces
2. B – Install non-slip mats and clean regularly
3. B – Improve grip and reduce slips on icy surfaces
4. B – Prep vehicles with plows, supplies, and emergency kits
5. B – Short steps, feet flat, arms for balance