



Preparing for Winter Weather

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Slips, trips and falls are prevalent when winter weather takes hold — and preparation is the first step in reducing the risk. Consider meeting with the safety team and facilities department to discuss the overall plan for winter weather preparations.

To begin the process, your team may consider:

- Reviewing loss data from prior years to identify areas with a history of falls
- Create a winter slip / fall prevention campaign with monthly releases
- Make a plan to post slip/trip/fall advisories around the building or on monitors
- Mark your calendar to broadcast email reminders as part of the campaign
- Review the United Heartland “Walksafe” library for available resources

Next steps of the plan may involve:

- Ensuring there is a process to monitor weather advisory alert systems
- Check the inventory and readiness of snow blowers and other snow removal equipment
- Reconnect with any needed snow removal / ice-melter contractors
- Verify where snow piles will be located to reduce melt crossing over walking paths
- Maintain a supply of salt, sand and/or other ice melters.
- Position salt bins near high traffic doorways

Conduct a tour before the winter months and check on such things as:

- Check exterior lighting systems for operability
- Look for potholes, cracks, and other trip hazards in parking lots and sidewalks
- Add additional entryway mats where needed
- Plan to re-direct foot traffic from make-shift paths to sidewalks that are plowed and salted

During the winter months, temperatures outside can fluctuate causing snow to melt and then refreeze. This process, (the freeze-melt-refreeze cycle) often results in a thin layer of ice on walkways and roadways — commonly referred to as “black ice.” The presence of black ice creates unsafe walking conditions, since sidewalks and other walkways can be covered with clear ice that looks dark gray — like a wet sidewalk.

This can be hazardous and is a huge threat to slip, trip and fall safety. Similarly, black ice can result in hazardous driving conditions, since the ice is virtually transparent. Driving on black ice is particularly dangerous because the roadway can simply appear wet, so drivers may not recognize the slippery conditions until it’s too late.

Common black ice areas at places of employment include:

- Outside areas around buildings
- Around downspouts and parking lot drains
- In between vehicles in parking lots

To combat black ice, maintenance and other personnel need to be vigilant about monitoring walking surfaces during periods of temperature fluctuations. Proper salting and surface treatment practices should be followed to help get rid of any ice areas that could cause injuries.

For additional information on resources available, visit our website: [Campaign: WalkS.A.F.E. | United Heartland](#)