

WINTER SLIP & FALL SAFETY TIPS

It is that time of season where slips and falls occur at an increasing number. The information below provides some good advice on being aware of your surroundings and ways to prevent slips and falls.

***How to Prevent Slips and Falls**

- Wear the proper foot gear.
- Take small steps to keep your center of balance under you.
- Walk slowly and never run on icy ground.
- Keep both hands free for balance, rather than in your pockets.
- Use handrails from start to finish.
- Avoid carrying loads on stairways; or carry loads that you can see over.
- Keep you eyes on where you are going.
- Test potentially slick areas by tapping your foot on them.
- Step - Don't jump from vehicles and equipment.
- Keep walkways clear of debris, water, ice and slippery materials.

When these helpful hints don't work, and you know you are going to slip, try to reduce your potential injury when falling by:

- Roll with the fall. Try to twist and roll backwards, rather than falling forward.
- Relax as much as possible when you begin to fall.
- Toss the load you are carrying. Protect yourself instead of the objects being carried.

****Safe Winter Walking**

Walking to and from parking lots and between buildings during the winter requires special attention to avoid slipping and falling. We often forget how dangerous slipping and falling can be. The National Safety Council estimates that occupational falls cause approximately 300,000 injuries annually, including some deaths.

No matter how well the snow and ice is removed from streets and sidewalks, people will encounter some slippery surfaces when walking outdoors in the winter. Each year many 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.

1. Plan ahead; give yourself sufficient time and plan your route.
2. Wear shoes or boots that provide traction on snow and ice: rubber and neoprene composite. Avoid plastic and leather soles.
3. Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles; use the vehicle for support.
4. Walk in designated walkways as much as possible. Taking shortcuts over snow piles and areas where snow and ice removal is not feasible can be hazardous. Look ahead when you walk; a sidewalk completely covered with ice may require travel along its edge for traction.
5. When given no choice but to walk on ice, consider the following:
 - Take short steps or shuffle for stability.
 - Be prepared to fall.
 - Bend your back and head forward so you won't slam your head on the pavement as your feet shoot out from under you.

Finally, when entering buildings, remove snow and water from footwear to prevent creating wet slippery conditions indoors.