



SAFETY FLASH

Winter Weather and Slip, Trip, and Fall Risk

Practical loss control guidance for safer facilities and workforces

Winter weather significantly increases the risk of slip, trip, and fall (STF) incidents across workplaces. Snow, ice, and cold temperatures create hazardous walking conditions that can lead to injuries, operational disruptions, and workers' compensation claims. With the right preparation and awareness, many of these incidents are preventable.

The following guidance highlights practical steps organizations can take to reduce STF risk during winter conditions, both outdoors and inside facilities.

Exterior Winter Hazards

Slip and falls on exterior walking surfaces with snow and ice account for a large portion of winter-related injuries. Employers should ensure walking-working surfaces are kept clean, dry, and free of hazards whenever possible.

Key considerations include:

- Prompt removal of snow and ice from sidewalks, walkways, and entry points
- Regular monitoring of outdoor walking surfaces as conditions change
- Use of ice melt or similar treatments to improve traction
- Clearing hazards as quickly as possible, consistent with OSHA guidance

Proactive maintenance of exterior areas is one of the most effective ways to reduce winter STF exposure.

Employee Awareness and Safe Walking Practices

Employee behavior plays a critical role in preventing slips, trips, and falls during winter weather. Simple reminders can significantly reduce risk. Encourage employees to:

- Slow down and take short, deliberate steps (“walk like a penguin”)
- Wear footwear with good traction
- Put phones away while walking
- Stay alert for black ice, which is often invisible and forms quickly

STF incidents are more likely when individuals become complacent or distracted, especially during routine movements.

Interior Hazards During Inclement Weather

Slip, trip, and fall hazards do not stop at the door. Snow, ice, and ice melt tracked indoors can create additional risks.

Recommended controls include:

- Increasing floor cleaning during inclement weather
- Quickly identifying and addressing wet areas
- Using mats, runners, or dryers near entrances to contain moisture
- Adding extra mats or anti-skid materials to manage ice melt residue

Facilities teams should anticipate interior hazards and adjust maintenance routines accordingly during winter conditions.

Staying Prepared

Setting expectations and proactively reminding employees about winter weather risks is an essential first step in maintaining a safe and prepared workforce. With attention to seasonal conditions and consistent preventive measures, organizations can significantly reduce the likelihood of slip, trip, and fall incidents while supporting a safer workplace for everyone.

Questions or site-specific considerations?

Please contact the Symphony Risk Loss Control team at kmasters@symphonyrisk.com.

Let Us Play For You!

The information provided is not intended to convey legal advice, and it is strongly recommended to consult with a licensed attorney for any follow-up and/or legal advice.