

Avoiding Falls on Ice & Snow

Snow and ice storms, which often include dangerous sheets of ice and banks of snow, can transform parking lots, steps and sidewalks into precarious situations for employees to navigate.

Over a five-year period, CIRSA has had 618 claims totaling \$7,347,607 in workers' compensation and liability claims associated with falls, slips, and trips associated with ice and snow. These injuries cause many types of debilitating injuries and time away from work. Situational awareness and choosing the right type of footwear to address these scenarios can dramatically reduce the chance of a slip and fall injury.



Major contributing factors causing slips & falls include:

- Improper footwear for winter walking conditions
- Walking or running too fast for the conditions
- Poor walking surface conditions
- Inadequate removal of snow and salt
- Poor lighting or visibility
- Lack of handrails
- Carrying laptops or other materials

When walking over ice and snow remember to:

- Choose the right type of footwear for winter walking conditions. Choose footwear which has a heavy tread and flat bottom. Avoid smooth soles.
- Plan ahead. Look for slip hazards such as black ice and scan the path of travel. Instead of looking down look where your feet will go next and anticipate ice or an uneven surface.
- Maintain a focus on the slip and fall exposures when walking.
- Take shorter, slower steps, keeping the feet shoulder-width apart.
- Place the whole foot down at once, then slowly shift your weight before bringing the other foot forward.
- Keep your knees loose. Let them bend to keep the center of gravity close to the ground.

- Some people prefer to drag their feet or shuffle them but remember to place the whole foot on the ice at once and maintain your one foot base of support.
- Use handrails when walking down or up steps and plant your feet securely on each step.
- Be careful when shifting your weight such as when stepping off a curb or getting into or from a vehicle.
- Avoid taking shortcuts. Snow removal in these areas may not be possible.

