

## Preventing Winter Slips, Trips and Falls

Injuries caused by slips, trips and falls are a major burden to business operations, especially during the winter months. The National Safety Council estimates that workplace falls cause approximately 300,000 injuries and more than 1,500 deaths each year. Slips, trips and falls account for about 15% - 20% of all workers' compensation costs.

Wintertime brings snow and ice and an increased risk of slips and falls due to slippery sidewalks, parking lots and work areas. Now is the time to ensure precautions are taken to minimize the risk of slip and fall injuries in the winter months ahead.

### Important Tips for Winter Safety:

- ✓ Keep adequate supplies of snow and ice removal tools in readily accessible areas.
- ✓ Shovel and salt as often as necessary to keep walking areas clean and dry.
- ✓ Watch for areas where ice tends to form; remove ice accumulations promptly.
- ✓ Contract with a snow removal company to keep your parking lots clear of snow and ice. (Make sure that the contracted company has workers' compensation insurance.)
- ✓ Limit walking to designated walkways as much as possible. Discourage taking shortcuts over snow piles and in areas where snow and ice removal is not feasible.
- ✓ Sales and shop employees should wear shoes or boots that are specifically designed to provide traction on wet, slippery surfaces. Strap-on or slip-on footwear designed for winter weather can be worn for additional protection.
- ✓ Test the travel path for slickness by sliding your shoe/boot on it before proceeding.
- ✓ Take short steps to maintain your center of balance over your feet.
- ✓ Walk slowly; never run on snow or ice covered surfaces.
- ✓ When entering and/or exiting vehicles, use the vehicle for support. Never jump from vehicles or equipment.
- ✓ When entering a building, remove snow and water from footwear so you don't create wet, slippery conditions indoors.
- ✓ Place high quality, beveled edge mats in walking areas subject to water or snow accumulation. Change mats regularly to ensure those in place are dry and serviceable.
- ✓ Apply a slip-resistant floor treatment in shop areas. Clean and maintain these floors according to the floor treatment manufacturer's specifications.