



Winter Safety Tips

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.

No matter how well the snow and ice is removed from streets and sidewalks, you will probably encounter some slippery surfaces when walking outdoors in the winter. It is important to continually be aware of the dangers of ice and slippery surfaces. When walking in winter snow or ice, keep the following in mind:

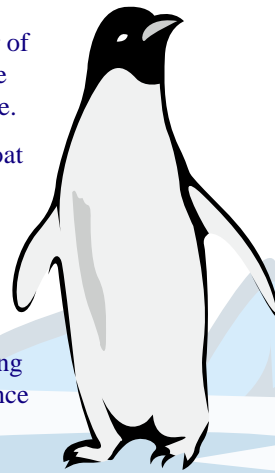
Walking in a Winter Wonderland

- * Wear shoes or boots that provide traction on snow and ice; boots made of rubber and neoprene composite are best. During bad weather, avoid boots or shoes with smooth soles and heels.
- * Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles; use the vehicle for support.
- * Walk in designated walkways as much as possible. Taking shortcuts over snow piles and other frozen areas can be hazardous. Look ahead when you walk; a snow- or ice-covered sidewalk or driveway, especially if on a hill, may require travel along its grassy edge for traction.

Do the “penguin shuffle”

It might sound silly, but it works for penguins! Adopting a “penguin posture” helps widen your center of gravity, making it easier to walk (and harder to fall) when walking on snow or ice. Here’s how:

- * Point your feet out.
- * Keep your neck straight.
- * Go slowly.
- * Take short steps or shuffle for stability.
- * Extend your arms out to your sides to maintain balance (don’t keep your hands in your pockets where they are unavailable to help maintain balance).
- * Bend slightly, walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible.
- * Wear a heavy, bulky coat that will cushion you if you should fall.
- * It’s OK to wear golf shoes or cleats to increase traction, or to use ski poles or a walking stick to keep your balance in particularly bad ice or snow.



- * If you do fall, keep your hands free and extended for balance and to help break your fall.
- * Try to avoid landing on your knees, wrists, or spine; try to fall on a fleshy part of your body, such as your side.
- * Try to relax your muscles if you fall; you’ll injure yourself less if you are relaxed.
- * If you fall, fall with sequential contacts at your thigh, hip, and shoulder to avoid using your arms to protect against breakage.

The safe way to “shovel it”

- * When outside shoveling snow, dress warmly, but loosely enough to allow easy movement.
- * As with any other lifting task, bend at the knees to reduce strain on your back.
- * Slide the shovel blade under the snow.
- * Straighten the legs to lift.
- * Pivot the body by moving the feet (do not twist the torso).
- * Take frequent mini-breaks: Shovel for five minutes, then rest for two.
- * Bent-handled snow shovels are ergonomically designed to allow you to reduce bending at the waist.
- * Spray the shovel blade with Teflon[®] coating or cooking spray to allow the snow to slide off more easily.



In winter, keep in your car at all times:

- * Jumper cables
- * Flashlight
- * Ice scraper
- * Flare
- * Blanket
- * Shovel
- * Sand or salt/Halite





Driving safely in winter

Of all the things you can do to make winter driving less stressful, giving yourself a little more time is the most important. Going slower is also a key to safe driving in winter.

Take special care when driving in ice or snow:

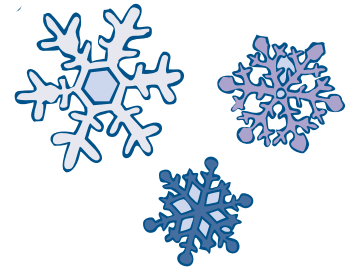
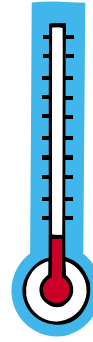
- * Drive slower than normal in slippery conditions.
- * Increase your distance between you and vehicles in front of you.
- * Be prepared for skids by slowing down early on curves and on downhill slopes.
- * Keep your headlights on, both to help you see and to help others see you.
- * Don't try to drive around or through an obvious trouble zone—slow down and be prepared to stop.
- * Don't assume that a 4-wheel-drive vehicle is skid-proof!
- * Don't let ice or snow accumulate on your windshield, windows, mirrors, or lights.
- * Don't mix driving and alcohol.

In extreme weather conditions, the safest choice is to stay off the road!

Also, make sure:

- ✓ Tires have been properly inflated
- ✓ Tires have sufficient tread
- ✓ All lights work
- ✓ Windshield wipers work properly; blades are not worn
- ✓ Windshield washer fluid reservoir is full and works properly
- ✓ Battery is charged and doesn't need replacement

Don't get left out in the cold



Avoiding Hypothermia and Frostbite

Exposure to cold can lead to a number of health problems, including death. Some of the health problems caused by cold stress include frostbite and hypothermia, and they should be taken very seriously.

You are at an increased risk for cold stress if:

- * You have a predisposing health condition such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or hypertension (high blood pressure).
- * You take certain medications that might have a greater effect in cold weather
- * You are in poor physical condition, have a poor diet, or are older.

What is frostbite? Frostbite occurs when an area of the body is exposed to extreme cold for a prolonged time and actually freezes, causing ice crystals to form between cells and draw water from them, which leads to cell dehydration.

What is hypothermia? Severely reduced core body temperature that causes shivering, reduced mental alertness, and, sometimes, loss of consciousness. Because of factors such as wind chill, hypothermia can occur at 30-50 degrees F.

Note: Hypothermia is a medical emergency!!

To prevent problems caused by exposure to cold:

- * Wear warm clothing (several thin layers are better than one thick one).
- * Wear a face mask or scarf.
- * Have easy access to warm shelter.
- * Avoid dehydration (drink hot or warm caffeine-free liquids or fluids).
- * Follow work/rest cycles that allow you to spend time in a warm shelter.
- * Stay dry.
- * Use the buddy system.
- * If stranded, get out of the wind and stay active by stamping feet, clapping hands, or swinging arms to keep blood flowing and to keep your body warm.
- * Go at once to a warm environment if severe shivering is present.



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