

Mid-Winter Reminder – Slip & Fall Prevention

The following steps will help to reduce slip and fall hazards in the workplace:

1. Inspect your workplace floors on a regular basis. Identify and correct any deficiencies. Repair leaking roofs and equipment and clean up spills. Provide sturdy handrails on all stairways to porches or doorways, and maintain good lighting. Repair uneven floors – fill and seal cracks and potholes, to prevent further damage.
2. Review walking surfaces at work stations, walkways, entrances/exits, and parking areas. Remove obstructions, and maintain surfaces prone to water/ice accumulation. Use absorbent material, sand/salt, anti-slip runners, etc. as needed. Keep floors clean – remove debris with a broom, and mop areas as needed. Alert workers to hazards – make sure to use wet floor signs, cones, barricades, and verbal reminders as needed.
3. Wear shoes or boots designed for good traction. Avoid smooth-soled shoes, walking shoes with soft spongy soles, or high heels. Wear shoes and boots with good tread and replace worn out footwear. For extra traction, wear shoe studs – metal studs on a rubber base that slip over your regular shoes.
4. Spread a layer of sand, salt, gravel, or cat litter to provide extra traction on ice and promote melting.
5. On icy surfaces, bend your knees a bit and walk slowly and deliberately, shifting your weight completely at each step. Use more care than walking on dry, firm ground.
6. One of the main ways to help prevent falling is to look where you are going! even if the walkway has been cleared of snow and ice. Areas that do not get sufficient direct sunlight, and spaces where snow accumulates (such as near roadside curbs or between parked cars) remain icy long after the rest has melted or been removed. It is easy to have a false sense of confidence because most of the path “looks” clear,” which can lead one to be less careful.
7. Be especially watchful for “black ice” – that almost invisible sheet of ice that forms after roadways thaw and refreeze. The road, sidewalk, or parking lot may look like they are simply wet, when in fact the thin ice on the surface is extremely slick.
8. Keep your field of vision clear. Wear hats that do not cover the eyes. Coats should be able to close sufficiently so you can easily see where you are stepping.
9. Make sure coats, belts and scarves don’t drag on or near the ground where they can cause tripping.
10. Do not overload yourself with packages. Anything that throws your balance off can increase the risk of falling. Make several trips, rather than carrying everything at once.