



# Monthly Safety Bulletin



Winter is fast approaching. Though it can be a beautiful time of year, it brings with it several concerns. Employees of Facilities face great dangers when exposed to snow and ice. Falls being one of the leading threats. Over the course of the past four years, we have tried several types of slip resistant shoe covers, none are 100% effective on snow and ice.

Many of the Custodians like the Shoes for Crews overshoe guard shown. They can be worn indoors and outdoors. You can order these from the storeroom.

The YAK-Traks with the coils can cause injuries if you wear them indoors or have the coils going the wrong direction by placing the toe at the heel or putting them on inside out.

The Grip Lights you must scratch the bottom of the sole on concrete to activate the grit material that helps keep you from slipping.

## ALWAYS FOLLOW MANUFACTURER INSTRUCTIONS

### "Stay Up on Your Feet"

#### Tips Safer Shoveling

- If you are inactive and have a history of heart trouble, talk to your doctor before you take on the task of shoveling snow.
- Avoid caffeine or nicotine before beginning. These are stimulants, which may increase your heart rate and cause your blood vessels to constrict. This places extra stress on the heart.
- Drink plenty of water. Dehydration is just as big an issue in cold winter months as it is in the summer.
- Dress in several layers so you can remove a layer as needed.
- Warm up your muscles before shoveling by walking for a few minutes or marching in place. Stretch the muscles in your arms and legs, because warm muscles will work more efficiently and be less likely to be injured.
- Pick the right shovel for you. A smaller blade will require you to lift less snow, putting less strain on your body.
- Lift with your legs not your back. Bend your knees and keep your back as straight as possible so that the lifting comes from your leg muscles, not your back. Never bend at the waist. Step in the direction that you are throwing snow. This will help prevent the lower back from twisting and will help alleviate any back soreness that you might typically experience the day after a hard shoveling job.
- Create some distance between the hands. This will give you more leverage and make it easier to lift snow.
- Pick-up smaller loads of snow. It's best to shovel by sections. If you are experiencing snowfall levels of 12-inches or higher, take it easy and shovel 2-inches off at a time.
- Do push. Don't lift. Save your back and your energy by simply pushing the snow to the side instead of lifting the snow and throwing it off to the side.
- Listen to your body. Stop if you feel pain or observe heart attack warning signs. These may include chest pain as well as shoulder, neck or arm pain; dizziness, fainting, sweating or nausea; or shortness of breath. If you think you're having a heart attack, seek medical help immediately.

## Fall Prevention in Ice & Snow

Every winter season, fall accidents claim the lives of hundreds and leave many more with distressing long term injuries. It is very possible that a thin sheet of transparent ice covering your pathway puts you at potential risk for an accident. When you approach a sidewalk or roadway that appears to be covered with ice or snow, always use extreme caution. **This 9-tip checklist can help you avoid the potential injury that could lead to a painful surgery and a long term recovery:**

- Take sidewalks when possible. If there is no sidewalk and the street is clear, walk against the flow of traffic and stay as close to the curb as possible. Avoid walking in the streets at all costs if possible.**
  
- If it's an emergency, and you can't avoid the street, wear bright or reflective clothing.
  
- Wear clothing that does not restrict your vision. Stay warm, but DO NOT impair your vision with hoodies, ski masks, scarves, hats, etc. This type of clothing could prevent you from spotting icy conditions leading to a fall.**
  
- Snow and ice cause havoc quickly, so use extra caution when crossing roadways, and always cross at designated crosswalks.
  
- Ice hides under a light dusting of snow. Just because you don't see the ice doesn't mean it's not there waiting for your unsuspecting footfalls.**
  
- When walking on unfamiliar sidewalks or roads, keep alert. You may not have knowledge of where potential danger exists.
  
- Where you can't avoid the ice and snow, bend your knees slightly and take slower, shorter steps reducing the probability of a slip and fall injury.**
  
- When using the steps at someone's home, apartment, or public facility, walk slow and take shorter steps when descending. The same is true of driveways and other hilly terrain; these areas can be very dangerous when they become slippery. Steps especially can be hard to clear and build up ice easily.
  
- Be aware of overhead exposures! Falling icicles kill hundreds of innocent people annually. Icicles build up in size very quickly with dagger-like formations. Again, hundreds of people are injured by falling ice. Stay clear from the edges of buildings.**