

WORKPLACE SNOW & ICE REMOVAL PLAN

Is Your Workplace Prepared for Winter Weather?

It's important to have a workplace snow and ice removal plan.



Having a snow and ice removal plan for your workplace is imperative for the safety of your employees and customers.

Every year, slips and falls on icy walking surfaces are a leading cause of workplace injuries during the winter months. Hospital emergency rooms always see an increase of patients who have fallen after a snowfall or icy conditions. These injuries can be anything from a broken wrist to more severe fractures and even life-threatening head trauma. Being proactive with a comprehensive snow and ice removal plan can help prevent winter workplace slips, falls and injuries.

Key personnel & processes for snow removal

- Appoint a plan coordinator (and backup coordinator) and assign responsibilities and specific duties to properly trained employees.
- Establish a budget for snow removal expenses, materials and contractors.
- The coordinator (and backup coordinator) must monitor weather forecasts and ensure that snow removal staff is on call prior to snow or ice event.
- The use of motorized snow removal equipment like snow blowers and plows is preferred versus manual shoveling of snow and ice when possible.
- Make sure that all designated front-line and backup snow and ice removal employees are properly trained to use snow removal equipment and de-icing chemicals.
- Make sure these employees are fitted with proper personal protective equipment. I.e. snow and ice cleats, reflective vests, safety glasses and layers of cold weather clothing.



TIP: Consider purchasing "bent handle" snow shovels for your snow shoveling maintenance workers. These ergonomically designed shovels help reduce the amount of bending and strain on the back when shoveling and lifting snow.

- Be aware of the physical condition of your employees and do not allow workers to overly exert themselves. Workers involved in shoveling and de-icing tasks should take allotted breaks to rest, warm-up and stay hydrated and nourished.
- In blizzard-like conditions, workers should wait until conditions improve before attempting snow removal.
- Instruct and train employees to conduct a physical inspection of your facilities' grounds before the first snowfall, documenting all potential walking surfaces, sidewalks, entrances, stairs and ramps, and parking areas that need clearing.
- Ensure that you have adequate staff scheduled to handle both the 1-inch snowfall and the heavy 1-foot snowfall.
- Be aware of melting/drainage areas across walkways that can refreeze after the initial clearing. These areas may need repeat clearing/de-icing.
- Encourage employees to report black ice/refreezing or other slippery walking surfaces to management as soon as possible for the exposure to be identified and possibly corrected.
- Develop and maintain a "Snow Removal Log" that documents and identifies the staff, dates and times of snow and ice removal. Keep detailed logs of any problem areas, including areas that routinely refreeze after initial clearing.

Snow removal equipment

- Provide proper snow removal equipment and tools, such as snow shovels, ice chippers, snow blowers, salt spreaders, ice melting chemicals/salt and nonskid runners/mats for entrance areas.
- Inventory and maintain in good working condition all motorized equipment, such as snow-blowers with fuel, etc.
- Direct pedestrians' attention to icy areas by placing warning cones or signs where needed.
- If necessary, contract with a fully insured, experienced and dependable snow removal/plow contractor. Agree in advance as to the services provided and timeline for the snow removal.

This information and any noted recommendations are advisory only: Chesapeake Employers' Insurance Company and the Injured Workers' Insurance Fund assume no liability for identification or correction of conditions or hazards as the safety and health of employees remain the employer's responsibility. Not all foreseeable hazards or conditions in need of correction, and not all possible controls to address them, may be listed. Use of all or part of this safety information does not relieve employers of their responsibility to comply with all current and applicable local, state and/or federal laws, regulations, and codes. While the information herein is believed to be current as of the date published, the reader should rely upon the most current standards as laws, codes, and regulations are updated frequently.