

*Editor's Note: Safety Group Program Monthly Newsletter Article – Nov. 2017
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Tips to Prevent Tripping Up in Winter Weather

One million Americans slip, trip, or fall every year, costing employers an average of \$40,000 per incident and accounting for 20 percent of all job-related injuries and 15 percent of all accidental deaths — about 20,000 people annually. These two sets of tips — one for workers, the other for worksites — can help keep your employees on their toes and on task:

Tips for Worker Safety

- Wear boots or overshoes with non-slip soles. Avoid footwear that has smooth soles, which increase the risk of slipping.
- Walk cautiously. Know that you could slip or quickly encounter an unseen patch of ice.
- Avoid the temptation to run to beat traffic when crossing a street. (We should always try to avoid running at work.)
- Your arms help keep you balanced, so keep your hands out of your pockets. Avoid carrying loads that are unwieldy and may cause you to lose balance.
- Look ahead to see where you step. When walking on icy areas, spread your feet slightly to increase your center of gravity and take short, shuffling steps. Curl your toes under and walk as flat-footed as possible.
- Avoid horseplay or other distractions.
- When entering or exiting your vehicles, hold onto the door or side of the vehicle for extra support. Maintain three points of contact at all times.

Tips for Worksite Safety

- Have a program and procedures to promptly remove ice and snow from parking lots, garages and sidewalks.
- Email winter weather warnings to staff, cautioning them about ice, snow and slippery surfaces at the worksite. For staff who have no email access, post notices on bulletin boards.
- Post and distribute phone and email contacts for maintenance department, encouraging employees to report icy conditions.

- Place labeled bins of ice-melting chemicals and scoops that employees can use immediately on icy patches. The bins should include instructions for handling ice melting chemicals. Secure bins so they cannot be removed.
- Provide beveled-edge mats in entrances during winter months and when it rains.
- Water from melting snow or ice can accumulate inside the workplace and at entrances. Monitor these problem areas and keep them dry. Ensure that mats are in place; replace mats if they become saturated with water.
- Isolate problem areas by closing them to the general public, or install signs warning of the slip hazard. When you close or rope off a wet area, ensure that you don't redirect foot traffic to other slip and trip hazards.

Pinnacol Resources

For more information on preventing slips, trips and falls during the coming winter months, as well as sample checklists, pointers and worksite posters, visit Pinnacol.com. Additional resources are available on the website pages of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration and [National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](http://National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)). (While developed for healthcare workers, the NIOSH publication includes helpful tips to prevent winter falls at any workplace.) Or contact Safety On Call at safetyoncall@pinnacol.com or 303.361.4700 or 888.501.4752. Our safety services team stands ready to answer questions and help keep your workforce on sure footing.

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