

## Icy conditions

### Why it's important

Many workers have been seriously injured when slipping and falling on ice in the workplace.

In addition to the risk of personal injury, icy conditions in the workplace can result in damage to equipment, materials and buildings. As winter conditions are a fact of life in Ontario workplaces, it is important that icy conditions be addressed.

Addressing icy conditions in the workplace is not just a good idea, it's the law. Section 11 of the Regulations for Industrial Establishments states: "A floor or other surface used by a worker shall be kept free of obstructions, hazards and accumulations of refuse, snow or ice". Such surfaces include walkways and parking lots.

Icy surfaces may not only be found outside the workplace but inside as well. Floors around loading docks and large door openings may also become covered in ice.

Attending to snow removal and icy conditions is a critical element of an effective health and safety program. An in-house person should be responsible for ensuring that snow and ice issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.

### How to control the hazards

There are several items that should be addressed in the procedures designed to control ice and snow conditions in the workplace. These include the following:

- Designating a specific person by name or position (such as yard supervisor) who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that corrective action is taken when icy conditions exist.
- Monitoring weather conditions to prepare for adverse weather conditions before they arrive.
- Maintaining supplies like sand or salt on the property ready for use.
- Ensuring that warning signs are posted at the start of each winter season.
- Having available emergency footwear (such as

clip-on ice cleats) that can be used if the need arises.

- Ensuring that staff wear appropriate footwear during the winter season.
- Having designated pedestrian areas that are salted or sanded before a shift starts or ends to minimize the risk of slips and falls while employees are coming and going from work.
- Ensuring that plowing and sanding activities are carried out in a timely manner (such as before the start of a shift). Maintaining emergency supplies (loader, sand, salt, etc.) on hand in the event that an external contractor is delayed.
- While ensuring that yard workers wear high-visibility clothing is recommended at all times of the year, it is especially important in the winter months when vehicle stopping distances are increased due to slippery surfaces.
- Ensuring that road and floor conditions are included in the monthly inspection form.
- If appropriate, equipping yard machines with tire chains.
- Providing appropriate parking spots for visitors to minimize their walking distance

### Show and tell

Talk about your company's icy conditions policy.

Be sure to remind workers to dress for the weather – whatever the conditions may be.

### Notes:

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