



Walking Safely on Ice and Snow

Winter is upon us and once again we will be facing the challenges of working in and walking on ice and snow. The Old Farmers Almanac, which boasts an 80% accurate weather forecast throughout its history, claims that the Northeast United States will be “Shivery and Snowy” and snowfall will be greater than normal.

Snow is bad enough, but icy conditions can be a far greater hazard to your health. Snow can easily be seen and removed and does have some traction. On the other hand, ice can be an unseen and dangerous condition not only in a vehicle, but especially on foot.

There is nothing worse than battling weather conditions and other traffic then to get to work, park your car, and THEN take a tumble and hurt yourself just feet from the door. Falling injuries on ice in parking lots and sidewalks are more common than you would think. In many cases they lead to serious fractures especially in the arms as employees slip and try to break there fall as they go down.

Here are some tips to help you when conditions are icy:

- Like many of us, if you are frustrated and tense after pulling into the parking lot after your commute because of the conditions and/or other drivers, take a moment and sit in the car with the heat on and settle down prior to getting out and walking to the door. When we are frustrated, we are much more likely to be rushed, not carefully paying attention as we walk from our car to the door. Additionally, with the stress and tension our muscles get tense and do not function as fluidly as needed when trying to walk on ice.
- Take very small steps when you walk always sliding your feet across the pavement rather than using your typical stride.

- If you must walk up or down an incline, turn sideways and slide your feet apart and together in a sliding side-step motion.
- Bend your knees just slightly as it will give you better balance while heading to the door.
- Ensure your feet are slightly apart to give you better balance.
- Carry something in your dominant hand while you are walking (lunchbox, etc). This will often help to ensure that if you do fall . . . you don't use and perhaps break your fall (and your hand/wrist/arm) using your dominant hand.
- And of course, look at the ground while you are walking. All too often when end up slipping on ice that we could see had we been looking for it.

"Walking in Icy Conditions | Safety Toolbox Talks Meeting Topics." Safety Toolbox Topics, safetytoolboxtopics.com/Weather/walking-in-icy-conditions.html.

How to walk on ice

1. Normally, when we walk, our body weight support is split mid-stride between legs.
2. This forces each leg to support the weight of the body at an unstable angle that is not perpendicular to the surface of the ice, possibly resulting in a nasty fall.
3. When walking, keep your center of gravity over your front leg.
4. One animal that has figured this out is a penguin. Walk like a penguin and you will be ok.



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SAFETY: FIRST. LAST. ALWAYS!