

Safety Newsletter

Merced County Schools Insurance Group

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

Winter 2022

Winter weather driving tips

Winter weather can often make road conditions dangerous and unsafe. According to the FHA 74% of all weather-related car accidents are due to wet roads. Sleet and snow cause 13%, while 3% are related to foggy conditions. When road conditions are unfavorable due to rain, ice, or fog it's always best to reschedule your trip, if possible. However, if you must drive when these conditions are present keep the following tips in mind if you to take to the roads:



- Always inspect your vehicle prior to hitting the road. Ensure your vehicle wiper blades and tires are in good condition.
- Carry emergency supplies with you such as jumper cables, blankets, ice scraper, first aid kit, and a battery charger pack for your cellphone and other electronic devices.
- Clean your windshield and mirrors of any dirt, dust, debris prior to the trip.
- Slow down and allow extra time to reach your destination
- Ensure the vehicle lights are on. During foggy weather use fog lights if you have them or use low-beam lights. Avoid using high beam lights.
- Leave plenty of distance between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- During extreme conditions where visibility is near zero, it is recommended to pull over until visibility improves. Stop over at a safe location such as a business parking lot. Try to avoid pulling over to the side of the road. But, if you have to, ensure you pull over as far as possible onto the shoulder. Once stopped, turn on your hazard lights and turn off all other lights.
- During rain or icy conditions, it is better to pump on your brakes rather than forcefully stomping on your brakes to come to an immediate stop. Keep your distance from other vehicles and pump on the brakes to slow down or come to a stop. Abruptly stomping on your brakes can cause hydroplaning in wet conditions and lead to a loss of vehicle control

Ladder Safety

Every year over 300 people die in ladder-related accidents and thousands more suffer from disabling injuries requiring emergency medical attention. Ladder accidents are caused by improper selection, care or use, not by manufacturing defects. Some of

the more common hazards involving ladders, such as instability, electrical shock, and falls, can be predicted and prevented. Prevention requires understanding how to properly select the correct ladder, inspect prior to use, good work procedures, and adequate ladder maintenance to help minimize your chances of an injury.

Ladders generally are constructed under three general duty ratings:

- Type I Industrial- Heavy-duty
 - Type I- 250 pounds
 - Type IA- 300 pounds
 - Type IAA- 375 pounds
- Type II Commercial- Medium-duty with a load capacity not more than 225 pounds.
- Type III Household- Light-duty with a load capacity of 200 pounds.



Choose a ladder that has enough weight capacity. Take into account your body weight along with the weight of any tools or equipment you will handle while on the ladder. Safety standards require each ladder to have a duty rating sticker with the specifications.



Here are some helpful tips that can help prevent an accident the next time you use a ladder:

- Do not try reaching so far that you lose your balance. Move the ladder closer and into strategic position to prevent overreaching.
- Always have 3 points of contact when on the ladder: 2 hand and 1 foot on the ladder or 2 feet and 1 hand on the ladder.
- Do not stand on the ladder's top three rungs.
- A damaged side rail may cause on side of a ladder to give way.
- Ladders used to reach a walking surface or roof must extended at least 3 feet beyond.
- Extension ladders need both locks holding to prevent overloading a rail.
- Step ladders should be securely spread open. Never using a folding step ladder in an unfolded position.
- Electrical shock can occur with metal or wet wooden ladders.
- Wear appropriate footwear, preferably a closed toe shoe. Check the bottom of shoe soles to ensure they are not wet or slick to prevent slipping when climbing up the ladder.

Summer 2021

Good Housekeeping in the Work Place

Housekeeping in the workplace is not just about cleanliness. It includes keeping work areas neat and orderly to facilitate a safe and healthy work environment. Good housekeeping is a basic part of reducing hazards in the workplace. Consequences of poor housekeeping include:

- Slip, trip, or fall on equipment, objects, and/or materials left out blocking the walkway.
- Loose or unsecured objects dropping or falling and striking employees.
- Emergency exits blocked creating evacuation issues during a crisis.
- Bumping into or striking against poorly stacked items or misplaced materials.
- Cause or exacerbate pest problems.



Good housekeeping in the workplace is something that employees must maintain and uphold regularly throughout the work shift, not just at the end of the day. Here are some tips on how you can integrate ensure effective housekeeping continues:

- Clean up any spills immediately. Call for assistance and ensure caution signs are posted.
- Eat and drink in the employee breakroom or cafeteria. This is also a great way to prevent pest issues in your office and at your workstation.
- Put away tools, equipment, and supplies as soon as you are done using them. Avoid leaving them on the floor, especially in the walkway.
- Do not block doorways, exits, or walkways. Additionally, blocking access to fire extinguishers, fire pull arms, emergency evacuation maps hanging on the wall, or electrical panels is prohibited. There should be 3 feet of clearance around these areas.
- Keep clutter to a minimum. Throw away items that are no longer used.
- Avoid leaving cabinets and drawers ajar, close if you no longer need access to them.
- Remove any cords or cables in walking areas. Avoid daisy chaining extension cords and surge protectors. Keep the area under your desk clear of cords or wires.
- Regularly inspect your work area.
- Report any accidents – this will help you to get the help you need to keep your workplace safe

Slippery surfaces

Slips and falls are the leading cause of injuries. According to Cal-OSHA there are about 700 fatalities per year due to a slip and fall. In addition, common injuries include broken bones, strains, sprains, and even traumatic brain injuries. A slip happens when there is too little friction between your footwear and the walking/working surface, resulting in loss of

balance. Slips can be caused by wet surfaces, spills, or weather hazards. Watching where you step and, how you step, can save you from a slip and fall. Here are some quick tips to help keep you out of the emergency room and staying upright:

Anticipate Ice – A drop in temperature of just a few degrees can cause melted ice/snow to refreeze, making surfaces particularly slick.

Keep Those Hands Free – Keep hands out your pockets. In fact, extending your arms out to the sides can significantly improve balance.

Take Slow, Short Steps – Take the time to plant your feet securely with each deliberate step. Grab onto a railing or other sturdy fixture for extra security.

Improve Center of Gravity – Increase your stability by pointing your feet slightly outward and keeping your body weight directly over your feet.

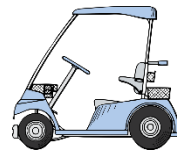
Wear Proper Footwear – Shoes with grooved rubber soles that allow the entire surface of the foot to come in contact with the ground are safest.

Land Safely – If you do slip, try to avoid landing on your tailbone, which can be particularly painful and slow to heal. Falling onto a fleshy part of your body, such as your side, is best if you can control it.

Do Not Walk While Distracted - avoid looking at that mobile device.

Uneven Ground- Use caution when stepping off curbs and walking up or down steep slopes.

Slippery Solids- Be aware that leaves, mud, and sand/dirt can also be slippery. Oils and grease come to the surface of pavements especially after the first rainstorm of the season. Always watch your step!



Utility Cart Safety

Accidents and injuries related to Utility Carts are on the rise. According to the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System, findings show that an estimated

156,040 people were treated in an emergency room each year from 2007-2017. Most utility carts, such as golf carts, lack safety features creating an increased risk for operators when involved in an accident. A utility cart is defined as any low-speed vehicle such as a golf cart, electric vehicle, or gator.

All employees who operate a utility cart must be trained/certified prior to operating a cart for the school district. Certification trainings must be renewed every 3 years - unless an accident occurs or a behavior indicates the need for retraining. A valid driver's license is required. Utility cart certifications can be revoked. The school district may revoke certifications for any unsafe action by the employee involving the use of the cart. For more information on utility cart safety guidelines refer to your school district's *Program Governing Operation of Utility Carts on School Grounds* handout.