



Protecting Workers During Winter Weather

Winter weather presents unique exposures for workers, from slipping on icy surfaces to driving on snowy roads. To protect your workforce, plan for these exposures and then take appropriate action if hazardous conditions occur.

Preparing for Hazardous Weather

- Examine the condition of walking surfaces in and outside of the facility and repair cracks.
- Ensure all exterior lighting is in proper working order.
- Examine roofs and make sure that workers on the roof use proper fall protection.
- Contact your snow removal company to ensure they are ready for your needs, including notification and communication processes, property problem areas and response expectations.
- Inventory snow removal equipment and accessories. Remember to document your inspection of all equipment. Remind all employees to avoid reaching into any power equipment to remove jams. Follow the manufacturers' instructions for safe operation, repair, and maintenance of all equipment. Employees under the age of 18 should not be permitted to operate power equipment.
- Plan for accommodations for workers who may need to stay at the facility during inclement weather. Inventory items needed to house staff.
- Establish and communicate a call-in number for employees.

During Hazardous Weather—Take Precautions

- Ensure walking surfaces are clear.
- Outdoor workers should wear proper outerwear and footwear, layer clothing, avoid cotton fabrics, and cover exposed skin.
- Manage employee breaks to avoid overexposure and common cold weather hazards such as hypothermia and cardio stress from shoveling snow.
- Establish priorities for snow removal. Fire lanes must be open for

emergency equipment. Fire hydrants, main entrances, ADA ramps and curb cuts, weather-exposed stairs, primary sidewalks, and parking lots should always be clear.

Driving During Inclement Weather

Poor visibility and adverse road conditions can create hazards all year, especially during winter months with snow, sleet, and ice. Give yourself extra time to navigate inclement weather and heavy seasonal traffic, and always maintain a safe following distance of five seconds or more.

Think SAFETY at all times when operating a vehicle (personal or the company's)!

Verify vehicles are ready for the weather ahead

- Inspect vehicles with added emphasis on lights, tire condition, and brakes.
- Replace wipers in disrepair and refill washer fluid.
- Equip each vehicle with items needed such as tire chains, ice melt, sand, ice scrapers, brush/broom, shovel, blanket, and mobile device chargers.
- Clear ice from all windshields, windows, and mirrors before driving!



Take steps to avoid accidents in inclement weather

- Slow down and increase following distance. Always leave room to avoid collisions.

- Use caution when driving on surfaces that may be covered with snow and ice.
- Watch for falling temperatures that could cause road surfaces to freeze.
- Use caution when passing vehicles, merging into traffic, and driving near pedestrians.
- Signal early to allow motorists time to react and adjust.
- Use headlights to help you see (and be seen) during bad weather. Use low beam headlights in fog or snow.
- Avoid sudden braking, sudden or quick acceleration, and sudden changes of direction.
- If the vehicle loses traction or skids, gradually slow down. Don't slam on the brakes. Steer your vehicle in the direction you want it to go.

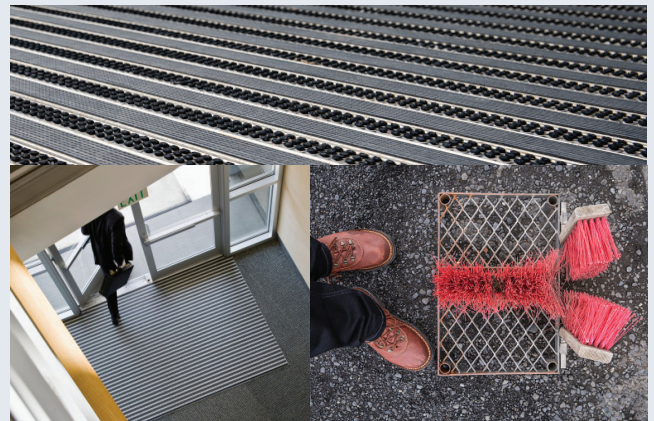
- Never pump Anti-Lock Brakes (ABS)—the system does that for you!
- For non-ABS, be sure employees are familiar with how to properly pump the breaks to reestablish and maintain rolling traction.

Weather conditions can and will change quickly and some employees may not be comfortable driving in hazardous conditions. Provide a communication plan to alert management and employees when conditions prohibit safe driving. Provide clear instruction to drivers as to when they need to safely exit and pull over.

Weather Mats

Place weather mats at all entrances. The length of the mat needs to capture as much moisture from shoes as possible (often, mats are too small to be effective).

- ❖ Keep porous mats outside so they absorb snow/ice from footwear.
- ❖ Use relatively rough mats in foyer areas.
- ❖ Use more absorbent walk-off mats to remove moisture.
- ❖ Change mats once saturated; walk-off mats should be cleaned frequently. Once a walk-off mat becomes filled with soil or liquid, the contaminant will then transfer to the soles of shoes and spread throughout the facility.
- ❖ Place shoe brushes at entrances to remove snow and ice
- ❖ Where applicable, provide space and facilities to allow employees to change footwear upon entering the building.
- ❖ Maintain floors and post caution signs where slip and fall conditions prevail.



To learn more about protecting workers during winter weather, reach out to your PMA Risk Control Consultant or contact us at heretohelp@pmagroup.com.

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