

“Tis the Season to be Safe”

Avoiding Slips, Trips and Falls



Slips and falls are a major cause of injury at home and in business. According to the National Safety Council, 25,000 slip and fall accidents occur daily in the United States; more than 16,000 people die each year as a result of falls; and one in five emergency room visits is the result of a fall. The National Safety Council estimated that slips, trips and falls account for about 15 percent to 20 percent of all workers’ compensation costs. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, slips, trips and fall accidents are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of occupational fatalities. The risk of injury is especially a concern to businesses with considerable foot traffic. Employees and other third parties on your premises – visitors, customers, vendors, contractors and subcontractors – could be at risk of a slip, trip and fall accident and injury particularly where unsafe conditions exist.

Unsafe conditions are accidents waiting to happen. Injuries caused by slips, trips and falls are a major burden to employers, especially during the winter months. Wintertime snow and ice bring an increased risk of slips and falls due to slippery sidewalks, parking lots and work areas.

Here are a few tips you may wish to share with your employees.

Parking Lots and Sidewalks

Make sure walking paths are properly illuminated.

Mark trouble spots such as snow banks and slippery curbs with caution tape or orange cones.

Remember to adequately salt walkways.

Be sure to remove re-melted snow and ice after the application of salt/snow melt.

Entrances and Exits

Ask all of your employees to enter and exit from one or two doors. That will make it easier to ensure snow is removed, ice doesn’t build up and conditions are less hazardous. Mop all entrances and exits regularly to prevent water accumulation. Place wet floor signage at entry and exit points to alert both employees and the public and reduce the potential for slips and falls.

Communicating with Employees

Talk to employees about things they can do to avoid slips and falls this winter.

Tips include:

- Avoid wearing high heels outside. Flat shoes with slip resistant soles or boots are best.
- When walking across ice or snow, be sure to take short, flat steps. Walk. Don’t run. Slowing down will decrease the chances of a slip and fall.
- When entering a building, remember to clean your footwear thoroughly on the floor mats or carpet. Mats should also be non-skid and slip resistant.
- Use walkways that have been salted or shoveled.
- Discourage taking shortcuts over snow piles and in areas where snow and ice removal is not feasible.
- Spread salt or sand when you see icy spots. You can help reduce the number of falls by taking action.
- Be aware of black ice—a thin, nearly invisible coating of ice caused when temperatures rise above freezing and quickly drop below freezing.

Winter Holiday Safety Tips

This holiday season; don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars, muggers and pickpockets a better chance to do their dirty work. Criminals love the holidays as much as everyone else, especially because it's an opportune time for crime.

Homes jam-packed with glittering gifts. Stores, malls and downtown streets teeming with unsuspecting shoppers. People rushing around, stressed out and careless, looking for last-minute gifts, trying to get everything done. Here are some tips on how to celebrate safely this holiday season:

If You Are Traveling

- Get an automatic timer for your lights.
- Ask a neighbor to watch your home, shovel snow, and park in the driveway from time to time.
- Don't forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it's a sure sign you're gone.
- Some law enforcement agencies if notified will make periodic checks on your home.

If You Are Out for the Evening

- Turn on lights and a radio or TV so it looks like someone's home.
- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it's just for a few minutes.
- Don't display gifts where they can be seen from outside.

If You Are Shopping

- Stay alert and be aware of what's going on around you.
- Park in a well-lighted space, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows, and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.
- Always look into your back seat before entering your vehicle.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible.
- Deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers. Don't overburden yourself with packages. Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.
- Shopping with kids? Teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.

Protect Your Vehicle

- Loading up on all those gifts is a sign of progress in the holiday shopping. But if those packages are left out in the open after they're in the car, your car has become a likely target for thieves. Remember the old cliché "Out of sight, out of mind?" The same idea applies to items in your car.
- Always lock your vehicle and store all items out of sight. Breaking into an empty car isn't worth a thief's time. However, anything left in plain view—from your holiday gifts to spare change, sunglasses, CDs, cell phones or briefcases—may tempt a thief.
- Help prevent your vehicle from being stolen by always locking your car and using anti-theft devices. And although it's cold, never leave your vehicle running while you run inside your home or a store—even if for only a minute or two.

If a Stranger Comes to the Door

- Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts, so be cautious when accepting a package.
- It's not uncommon for people to try to take advantage of others' generosity during the holidays by going door-to-door for charitable donations when there's no charity involved. Ask for identification, and find out how the funds will be used. If you aren't satisfied, don't give. Help a charitable organization you know and like instead.

After You've Opened the Gifts

Burglars know that many households have new, and oftentimes expensive, items in their homes following the December holidays—especially items such as new computers and peripherals, stereo components, televisions, cameras and other electronic equipment. In too many cases, residents make it easy for burglars to figure out which homes to target by putting boxes that identify their new gifts in plain view with their other garbage. Avoid becoming an easy target for post-holiday burglars by not leaving boxes for new electronics and other items in the alley or other garbage pick-up locations for several days at a time. Instead, break down any boxes you are throwing out, put them in garbage bags and place them inside a trash can. (In many cases, especially with computer equipment, you might consider keeping the boxes for safe storage, shipping or moving in the future.) Think about keeping broken-down boxes inside—in a garage, for example—until the evening before your regular garbage pick-up. Some burglars actually look inside garbage cans for evidence of holiday gifts. And, of course, if you see someone suspicious casing your neighborhood or if you see a burglary in progress, call the Police Department on **911**.

Take a Holiday Inventory

- The holidays are a good time to update—or create—your home inventory. Take photos or make videos of items, and list descriptions and serial numbers. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify stolen items and make insurance claims easier to file.
- Make sure things like TVs, VCRs, stereo equipment, cameras, camcorders, sports equipment, jewelry, silver, computers, home office equipment and power tools are on the list. Remember to check it twice!