



## Winter Weather Preparation

- 1. Develop plans for plowing, shoveling and salting.**
  - a. Do any employees come in early? If so, the plowing/shoveling/salting should be adjusted accordingly or employees should be directed to come in after this is done.
  - b. For operations with shift work, are plans in place to ensure plowing/shoveling/salting to provide adequate clearing before and after all shifts?
  - c. High visible vests should be worn by those engaged in plowing, shoveling and salting.
- 2. Are employees shoveling?**
  - a. Train on proper body mechanics.
  - b. Direct employees to push snow when they can rather than pick it up.
  - c. Consider the use of ergonomically designed shovels.
  - d. Place shovels in areas that are readily accessible.
  - e. Do not transport people in the bed or tailgate of the truck so they can shovel a walkway on the other side of the property.
- 3. Are employees salting or putting down anti-skid material?**
  - a. Did you order enough salt and/or anti-skid material?
  - b. Place salt in areas that are readily accessible.
  - c. How is the salt spread? Do you have a push behind, hand held or truck mounted spreaders?
- 4. How are bags of salt handled to prevent a strain/sprain injury?**
  - a. Employees often open salt bags with a knife because they do not want to take their gloves off. Provide safety box cutters or blades that can be handled with gloves to prevent a laceration.
  - b. Truck spreaders have a slip/fall and strain exposures as employees will need to climb onto the back of the truck to refill the spreaders. Employees are also handling up to 50 lb. bags of salt. Instruct employees to load the spreader from the truck and provide a safe means for them to access this area. Prevent employees from lifting bags from the ground and attempting to reload a tailgate spreader by lifting the bag over their head.
  - c. Provide guidance on safe lifting techniques for employees loading push behind salt spreaders.
- 5. Are you using any snow blowers or other power equipment to remove snow?**
  - a. Pre-season check – Complete a pre-season check of the snow blower and ensure all safety devices are working properly.
  - b. Train employees on proper use of snow blowers and other power equipment.
  - c. Who is getting gasoline and how is it being transported and stored?
  - d. Snow blowers can become especially dangerous when there is wet snow. The chute can become clogged and operators may try to clean it out with their hands and not stop the blower.
- 6. Have plans in place to reduce strain/sprain injuries and struck by injuries if you transport a snow blower to different work locations.**
  - a. Use caution with loading ramps placed on the tailgate of pick-up and dump-trucks. When it's snowing and wet, these ramps slide easily and only a couple inches of movement can cause the ramps to slide out of place and the snow blower can become unbalanced and fall.
  - b. Avoid lifting snow blowers. This practice can result in a back strain.
- 7. Are employees plowing?**
  - a. Make sure your plow truck has a flashing light to increase visibility.

- b. Backing up (especially around a building when no one can see you coming) is a major exposure for both pedestrians and property. Ensure employees are properly trained and aware of backing hazards.
- c. If plowing for an extended period of time employees should be directed to wear sunglasses to prevent “snow blindness”.
- d. When mounting the plow to the truck, train employees to keep feet and hands out from underneath the plow. It can sometimes drop without warning because the hydraulic fluid is still filling the lines.
- e. Remind employees to slow down when plowing. Often, the longer an employee sits in a plow truck, the faster he or she will begin to travel. This behavior is attributed to rushing to get finished as well as over confidence.

**8. Are employees protecting themselves from the elements as they remove snow?**

- a. Instruct employees to wear layers when shoveling. As they warm up, they can take layers off and prevent sweating. Sweating can lead to hypothermia once an individual begins to cool down.
- b. Keep skin covered to prevent frostbite.

**9. Will employees be removing snow from roof areas?**

- What controls are in place to prevent falls, strains/sprains and struck by injuries?

**10. Are you using a contractor?**

- a. Does the written contract specifically spell out the work to be done and when? For instance, does the contractor know they are doing both shoveling and plowing? If they are to perform salting be sure this is included as well.
- b. Are they aware of your needs for early employees, shift work, etc.?
- c. Do you have a current Certificate of Insurance (COI)?

**11. Designate specific pathways to be used by employees.**

- a. Restrict access to areas that are hard to keep free of ice due to melting/re-freezing.
- b. Prevent employees from taking “short cuts” through areas that are not maintained.
- c. Keep employees away from areas near rooflines as much as possible, especially a day or two after the snow. As snow begins to melt it will slide off the roof.

**12. Share information with employees on proper footwear**

- a. Office and other employee controls?
- b. Ice cleats?

**13. Provide driving tips and reminders to employees to help prevent a motor vehicle accident due to ice and snow.**

- In case of breaking down or getting stuck on the side of the road, make sure employees are prepared. Provide suggestions on what they should carry in their vehicle.