



# WINTER WALKING SAFETY

Winter weather can present hazardous conditions to workers and employers alike. Cold temperatures, strong winds, snow and ice can cause unsafe roadways and sidewalks and lead to dangerous walking environments. Winter weather conditions can amplify slip, trip and fall accidents that can cause injuries.

To prevent accidents, employers should always clear snow and ice from walkways and be sure to spread de-icer as soon as possible when wintry weather hits. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), employers should ensure proper supplies, such as salt and snow shovels, are on hand to combat inclement winter weather as soon as it occurs.

## HOW TO WALK ON ICE

When walking in wintry conditions, it is important to assume all surfaces are icy and to approach them with caution. A thin layer of moisture can freeze on a cold surface, creating dangerous black ice that can be nearly invisible. A good phrase to remember is to “walk like a penguin.”

- Keep your hands and arms free to help with balance.
- Angle your feet pointing outward.
- Maintain a lower center of gravity and tilt forward when walking.
- Take short shuffle-like steps and walk at a slower pace to react quickly to changes in traction.
- Focus on walking, and do not multi-task (e.g. using a mobile device, reading, etc.).

## TIPS TO REMEMBER

- Wear a heavy, bulky coat that will provide cushion should you fall.
- Wear bright-colored or reflective clothing to ensure drivers can identify you while walking.
- Ensure that a scarf, ear muffs or a knit cap does not interfere with your hearing when walking close to roadways.
- Always use handrails when walking on stairs or any type of angled surface.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets.
- Determine the safest path to get to your destination and take it.
- Do not attempt a short cut to save time; the unkept route may be hazardous.
- Wear footwear that provides good traction and insulation (e.g. insulated and water-resistant boots or rubber overshoes with good treads).

Contact your Encova Insurance safety and loss control consultant or visit the Encova safety and loss video library to learn more.