

A GUIDE TO

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# WINTER SAFETY

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*PLAN AND PREPARE FOR THE COLD AHEAD*

SUMMERSTEP

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## A GUIDE TO

# WINTER SAFETY

### *PLAN NOW FOR COLD AND ICY CONDITIONS*

With many unpredictable weather conditions year after year, get ahead of the game by taking precautions before the cold and snow set in. Prepare your home and business now and have a plan so that winter does not take you by surprise.

#### **WORKING IN THE ELEMENTS**

Cold weather can pose some major hazards if you haven't prepared for it. Failing to recognize and respect the dangers of winter is not recommended. Whether traveling through, working in, or enjoying the weather, the following tips are helpful to ensure safety and good health.



#### **WEAR LAYERED CLOTHING**

Multiple layers of loose-fitting clothing allows the person to adjust his/her comfort level and protection based on the current temperature. Tight fitting clothes reduce blood circulation. Many forget the danger of sunburn when it is cold outside, but it is always important to protect from the sun. Wear a hat, scarf or face covering and always wear waterproof gloves. Also, it is wise to keep a change of clothes in case existing clothes get wet. Being wet can increase the rate of heat loss from the body.

Always use proper engineering controls, safe work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE) required by employers in all work conditions.

#### **STAY HYDRATED**

It's easy to forget the simple importance of hydration when it is cold outside. It's not like the steamy summer months when you know we are sweating. You still sweat—even in cold temperatures. For optimal performance, keep the body hydrated.

#### **TAKE BREAKS**

When the weather is particularly cold and/or windy, regular breaks are important. If possible, take a break inside or under shelter. If it gets very cold, get inside and warm up.

#### **FROSTBITE AND HYPOTHERMIA**

Frostbite and hypothermia can set in unexpect-

edly. Get inside if signs of either begin to show. If a co-worker seems to be manifesting signs, help them get help immediately. Be aware of others and take care of each other.

### PROPER HEAT VENTILATION

If using a non-electric heater, ensure that there is proper ventilation to let gases like carbon monoxide escape.

People often use temporary, propane-powered heating equipment at home and on the job site, making it easier to finish projects on time and on budget. In addition to providing more comfortable working conditions, propane-powered heaters can also maintain the ambient temperatures necessary for common tasks like drywall installation or painting. However, like any portable heating device, propane-powered heaters must be used and maintained properly.

### WINTER DRIVING

Top off fluids, drive slowly and allow additional time to travel. Pay attention to changing road conditions.

### WEAR GOOD SHOES

Wear proper footwear when tackling winter weather. A pair of water resistant and insulated boots with rubber treads is important for winter safety. Slow your pace and shorten your steps when navigating snowy/icy walkways.

### CLEAR THE PATH

Make sure that walkways, paths, stairs, and entries are free from snow and ice. Do this as quickly as possible when a winter storm sets in. Slips, trips, and falls will decrease dramatically when the path is clear. On January 4, 2017, Doctors in Germany prescribed a strategy to avoid slipping on ice: walk like a penguin. Imagine everyone waddling back and forth like a rookery of penguins! This is not exactly what the German trauma surgeons meant. The technique involves leaning forward so that a person's center of



gravity is over the front leg rather than divided evenly between both legs. "When humans walk normally, body weight is split almost evenly over both legs, which the surgeons say increases the risk of a person losing their balance and falling on slippery surfaces." It's a comical visual; however, slipping on ice is a serious concern during icy and cold conditions.

### SLIP AND FALL STATISTICS

- Falls account for over 8 million hospital emergency room visits per year, representing the leading cause of visits (21.3%). Slips and falls account for over 1 million visits per year, or 12% of total falls.
- Fall fatalities are nearly equally divided between men and women. However, more women will experience a slip-and-fall accident. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, falls accounted for 5% of the job-related fatalities for women compared to 11% for men.

- Fractures are the most serious consequences of falls and occur in 5% of fall cases.
- Slips and falls do not constitute a primary cause of fatal occupational injuries, but represent the primary cause of lost days from work.
- Slips and falls are the leading cause of workers' compensation claims and are the lead-

ing cause of occupational injury for people aged 55 years and older.

### SNOW SHOVELING

While snow shoveling can be good exercise, it can also be dangerous for the optimistic shoveler who takes on more than he/she should. Shoveling snow is extremely strenuous, espe-

## SNOW SHOVELING ADVICE

- Stretch your muscles to prevent injury
- Dress in layers to stay warm
- Take breaks and stay hydrated.
- Over the age of **40** and/or relatively inactive? Be cautious.
- Heart trouble? Hire someone else.
- A dryer vent blocked by snow is a fire hazard. Remove snow to areas that will not block any ventilation.
- It is best to push snow, but if you lift the snow, keep the shovel blade close to you, to reduce back strain.
- Shovel only fresh snow and don't pick up too much at once.
- Periodically change your grip and the hand you are using to work different muscles.
- Bend your knees and lift with your legs.
- Wax your shovel blade, even cooking spray will work. Who knew?!
- Snow shovels come in plastic, aluminum, and steel varieties. Research the size and material best for you.

cially for those individuals who do not engage in regular cardiovascular activity. According to the Cleveland Clinic, approximately 11,000 people seek shoveling-related hospital treatment each year for injuries (93%) or cardiac issues (7%). Here are some tips from the National Safety Council for safe snow shoveling:

- Individuals over the age of 40 and/or those who are relatively inactive, should be especially careful.
- If you have a history of heart trouble, do not shovel without a doctor's permission.
- Avoid shoveling after eating or while smoking.
- Take it slow! Shoveling (like lifting weights) can raise your heart rate and blood pressure dramatically; so pace yourself. Stretch out and warm up to prepare your body before taking on the task.
- Shovel only fresh snow. Freshly fallen, powdery snow is easier to shovel than the wet, packed-down old snow.
- Push the snow as you shovel. It's easier on your back than lifting the snow out of the way.
- Don't pick up too much at once. Use a small shovel, or fill only one-fourth or one-half of a large one.
- Use proper technique. Lift with your legs bent, not your back. Keep your back straight. By bending and "sitting" into the movement, you'll keep your spine upright and less stressed. The strongest muscles in your body (your shoulders, torso and thighs) can do the work for you.
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion. If you run out of breath, take a break. If you feel tightness in your chest, stop!

## WINTER SAFETY CHECKLISTS

The included checklist will help you prepare for the winter months. It is important to consider the measures you need to exercise proper safety in both your home and commercial or industrial workplace. During 2014, the United States

## HOME SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

	Check that your home is properly insulated (walls and attic), that you have adequate storm windows, and that windows and doors are caulked.
	Have your heating systems professionally checked and serviced. It's important that they are clean, working properly and ventilate to the outside.
	Make sure you are equipped with carbon monoxide detectors and are familiar with the symptoms of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.
	Remove tree branches that could become heavy with ice or snow and fall on your home.
	If possible, shut off outside water valves.
	To protect exposed pipes, allow a small trickle of water run from connected faucets.
	Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow air to circulate around pipes.
	Keep your thermostat set to the same temperature day and night and leave it set to no lower than 55°F while away from home for an extended time. The extra cost of heating your home is minuscule in comparison to the expensive cost of damages from frozen or burst pipes.
	If your home has a fireplace, use a glass or metal screen to prevent sparks or even rollings logs from making their way to flammable carpet or furniture.
	When using a space heater, follow the three-foot rule- keep any surrounding items at least three feet away from your heater.
	Before going to bed, make sure any space heaters are turned off and fire embers are fully extinguished.

<b>WORK SAFETY PRECAUTIONS</b>	
	Keep walkways clear of pallets, boxes, or other items.
	Take extra time to keep floors clean and dry. Any snow tracked into your facility can quickly create a dangerously slippery surface.
	Use "wet floor" signs where necessary.
	Provide adequate lighting in your workplace to illuminate any wet or slippery surfaces.
	Encourage employees to wear slip-resistant footwear.
	If you are working on a project outdoors, review your work site safety every day. Surfaces can become dangerously slippery overnight.
	Schedule outside work in shorter increments and break up large projects into smaller tasks.
	Establish a warm area for employees to take breaks from outside work.
	Keep track of weather forecasts. The last thing you want is for your employees to be stuck working outside in a terrible snow storm or severely cold temperatures.
	Ensure that employees wear appropriate clothing for outside work such as a wind resistant coat or jacket, a hat, scarf, mittens, and waterproof boots.
	Make sure that employees stay dry. Wet clothing loses its ability to insulate and quickly transmits cold temperatures to the body.
	Educate employees to be familiar with and watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia and get immediate medical attention for any symptoms.
	Sprinkle icy surfaces with sand to provide traction or salt to melt the ice, or use walkway mats.

Department of Labor recorded 42,480 workplace injuries and illnesses involving ice, sleet, or snow that required at least one day away from work to recuperate. Of these reported incidents, 82% resulted from slips or falls on level ground (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Planning and preparing can save you significant money and time and prevent serious injuries.

## **SUMMERSTEP SNOW MELTING MATS**

An effective solution to keeping steps, doorways and walkways safe and ice-free is the Summerstep Snow Melting Mat. Summerstep heated mats are designed to be left outside all winter long, can be custom made to fit any location, and will melt approximately 2 inches of snow per hour while operating. It eliminates time-consuming shoveling and de-icing and prevents slips that could cause serious injury and even a lawsuit. To save time and hassle, and for added peace of mind, consider making Summerstep heated mats a part of your winter safety precautions.

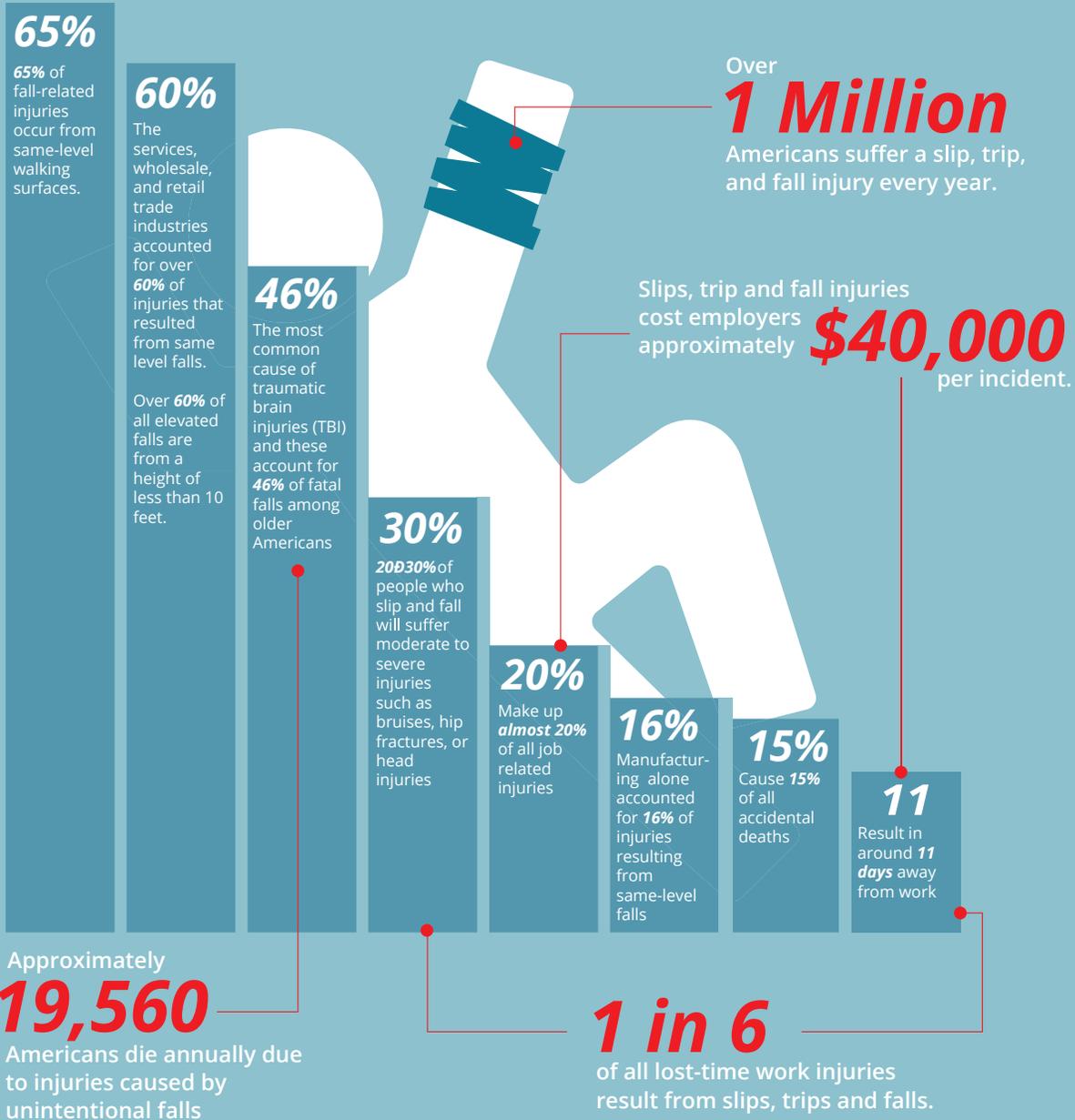
Summerstep outdoor heated mats keep stairs, doorways, ramps, walkways and alleyways safe and secure from slip and fall accidents. Stay safe and prevent hazards created by icy winter weather with Summerstep.

- Save time and money
- Keep walkways clear of ice and snow for your safety
- Environmentally safe, requires no chemicals
- Durable and long-lasting
- More convenient and less taxing than shoveling snow
- Reliable. Even in the worst conditions, SummerStep keeps the path clear

**LEARN MORE**  
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## SLIP AND FALL STATISTICS

Protecting yourself, your family, and your employees from slip and fall accidents is a priority, especially when icy and cold conditions arise. Prevent these incidents by preparing now and by educating those around you about slip and fall safety.



According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)