

Winter Weather Injury Prevention Ideas

Here are some ideas to keep in mind as the weather gets colder. Dress in layers to accommodate wind, shade, sunny area and low temperatures. Consider job specific gloves, hats and polarized sunglasses. Scarves and turtlenecks are great at reducing neck and shoulder tension by keeping your neck warm. Wear clothes you can be easily seen in, especially at night. Wear safety clothes.

Wear lotion to protect exposed skin and hands. For prolonged exposure cover your skin to avoid frostbite. Breathe through your nose or a scarf if it is especially cold.

If you get cold, take a break from the wind and weather and warm up in the vehicle. Do a few exercises to warm up and prepare the body for working.

Wear comfortable shoes (boots offer more ankle protection) with good support and efficient traction. Shoe inserts will provide additional cushioning and insulation for older shoes.

Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. Water or herbal tea is a great choice. Plan in advance and pack a thermos. Fuel up your day with a healthy breakfast.

Get enough rest to be alert and do your job well. Adequate sleep energizes your body and reduces stress, injuries and mistakes.

Slow down and be especially careful on slippery snow and ice. Be aware of high risk areas, trips and falls.

When shoveling: protect your back by tightening your stomach, using your legs, avoid twisting your back, take frequent short breaks. Push snow instead of lifting it when possible. Apply a "Pam" type cooking spray to your shovel when working with sticky snow.

Scooping Snow, What You Should Know!

While snow shoveling can be good exercise, it can be dangerous for optimistic shovelers who take on more than they can handle. The National Safety Council offers the following tips to help you get a handle on safe shoveling:

- ❖ Individuals over the age of 40, or those who are inactive, should be especially careful.
- ❖ If you have a history of heart trouble, do not shovel without a doctor's permission.
- ❖ Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- ❖ Take it slow! Shoveling (like lifting weights) can raise your heart rate and blood pressure dramatically; so pace your-self. Be sure to stretch out and warm up before taking on the task.
- ❖ Shovel only fresh snow. Freshly fallen powdery snow is easier to shovel than the wet, packed-down variety.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ 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. Your shoulders, torso and thighs can do the work for you.
- ❖ Do not work to the point of exhaustion. If you run out of breathe, take a break. If you feel tightness in your chest, stop immediately.
- ❖ Dress warmly. Remember that extremities, such as the nose, ears, hands and feet, need extra attention during winter's cold. Wear a turtleneck sweater, cap, scarf, face protection, mittens, wool socks and waterproof boots.