

## Winter Walking Conditions

### *Watch Out - It's Slippery Out There!*

How will this turn out? Will she get up, break a bone, or suffer a head injury? It will only take a millisecond to find out. Winter in the Midwest is always a challenge and any fall accident can be serious. One minute, it's dry and the next there is ice on the ground. Sometimes ice is hidden underneath snow and can't be seen. There is no defense to take when the fall starts. Here are common sense rules to follow:



- Report icy surfaces and conditions! Yes, we get snow and ice; however, someone may just have forgotten to throw ice-melt. The few minutes that it takes to address a hazard is the best time you may spend that day.
- Check the sidewalk or path before starting. How is the path to your designation? Is it covered with snow? Is there ice underneath? When in doubt, assume that the ground is slippery.
- You may need to go in and out of the building, but plan to limit the trips as much as possible.
- Wear proper footwear. This includes flat soles that are designed for good traction on slippery surfaces. Avoid wearing leather sole shoes in the winter.
- Watch where you are going and walk around icy surfaces...even if they are short.
- Long strides increase the risk for the foot to slip forward. If you do need to walk on a slippery surface take slow, shuffling steps. Balance is the key!
- Try to your hands free to help maintain your balance. If you are carrying a load, keep it balanced, don't overload yourself, and don't obstruct your vision.
- Like driving, distracted walking can cause injuries. Stay off the phone and don't try to multi task. Wait until you reach a point where traction is good or back inside.
- Use handrails or objects to support yourself if they are present.

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