



Risk Solutions

Winter Weather Tips

Winter weather is upon us and it's time to think about facilities and operations in regions that experience below freezing temperatures and appreciable snow accumulations. To prevent losses and support prudent risk management, we have compiled winter weather tips that may help protect your facilities, guests and customers, employees and contractors and fleet operations from the perils of winter weather.

Facilities

Prevent frozen pipes and fire sprinkler systems.

- Prevent frozen pipes and fire sprinkler systems by maintaining temperatures at facilities above 40°F, especially when buildings are idle for any reason. Check enclosures around dry-pipe sprinkler valves to maintain temperatures above 40°F.
- When using supplemental or temporary heating devices, keep away from combustibles and follow ALL manufacturer's recommendations for use. Use only in well ventilated areas and outdoors when possible.
- Always maintain access to the facility for the Fire Department and keep all nearby hydrants clear of snow piles.
- Test all fire, burglar, and carbon monoxide alarms. Install low temperature alarms in critical areas such as sprinkler control valve rooms where temperatures are dependent on supplemental heating systems.
- Ensure your heating devices are in good working order and if you use heating oil, make sure you have an adequate supply at all times and that all exhaust ports are clear of snow/ice to avoid carbon monoxide in the building
- Test all emergency generators and back-up systems. Provide and properly store fuels needed for all equipment e.g., snow removal. Clear all roof drains, downspouts, and outlets.
- If you are susceptible to snow loading conditions, review your removal plan and confirm all necessary tools are ready. Pre-plan safety training for workers including working from heights.

Guests and Customers

Prevent slips and falls experienced by guests and customers to your facility.

- Have snow and ice removal and a control plan for winter.
- If using a subcontractor, review contract for any limitations and provide for automatic and emergency notification. Obtain certificate of their liability insurance.
- Preplan snow spoil pile locations to prevent melt and refreeze in walking areas. Keep drains clear.
- Frequently inspect areas known to freeze and assign responsibility for inspection of slick areas prior to opening and during late afternoon when re-freezing can occur. Maintain records of inspection and corrections needed.
- Prepare a stockpile of equipment – shovels, snow melt and sand, and fuel for snow removal equipment.
- Obtain extra walk-off mats for entranceways, replace as mats become saturated.
- Ensure that wet floor signs are posted where applicable ; remove water and provide floor heaters/dryers as appropriate.
- Ramps and stairs should be cleaned and treated with environmentally friendly de-icers. Keep ice melt available near entrances and/or walkways.
- Keep all emergency exits clear of snow and ice and monitor/ reroute for changing conditions.
- Make sure parking lot and walkway areas are well lit.



Employees and Contractors

If your workers are subject to cold temperatures or work outside in winter weather, prevent frostbite and hypothermia.

- Provide adequate water-proof clothing and protective equipment suitable for the low temperatures they may encounter. Protect exposed skin – ears, face, hands, and feet.
- Require proper winter footwear with good traction to minimize slips, trips and/or falls.
- Provide frequent work breaks and areas for warming. Avoid excessive exertion. Stay hydrated.
- Provide first aid training for preventing cold weather emergencies; including recognition of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Ensure safety controls for snow blowers to prevent hand and arm injuries, use gas powered equipment outdoors with good ventilation due to carbon monoxide exposures.
- Train maintenance employees on winter safety requirements.

Fleet

Operating any motor vehicles is a challenge even in the best of weather. Here are few key areas to prepare for winter driving.

- Maintain and inspect vehicles for anticipated weather conditions. This Includes: tire tread, tire pressure, tire chains if applicable, antifreeze, cold temperature washer solvents and batteries.
- Provide an emergency kit including reflective vest, jumper cables, first aid kit, blanket, shovel, flashlight, cell phone charger, emergency light/triangles, snow brush/ice scraper and drinking water and snacks.
- Plan trips to avoid overpasses, bridges, or any elevated roads.
- Limit unnecessary trips. Use only plowed and more heavily traveled roads. Use road condition map apps.
- Encourage drivers to use common sense and communicate if driving conditions worsen to the point that the trip should be halted until the weather is more manageable.
- Avoid leaving a vehicle stranded in operating roadways. Find a parking area that will be accessible after the storm passes.
- Have drivers slow down and increase spacing between vehicles.
- Train drivers on winter driving safety.

➔ Questions on Loss Control or Safety

- Visit the site: [QBE Risk Solutions Center](#)
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