

Safe Winter Walking

Walking to and from parking lots and between buildings during the winter requires special attention to avoid slipping and falling. We often forget how dangerous slipping and falling can be. There are still a high number of slips and falls at the university due to winter weather conditions

No matter how well the snow and ice is removed from streets and sidewalks, employees will encounter some slippery surfaces when walking outdoors in the winter. Each year numerous employees are injured from slips and falls. It is important to be continually aware of the dangers and to walk safely on ice and slippery surfaces.

1. Plan ahead; give yourself sufficient time and plan your route.
2. Wear shoes or boots that provide traction on snow and ice: rubber and neoprene composite. Avoid plastic and leather soles.
3. Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles; use the vehicle for support.
4. Walk in designated walkways as much as possible. Taking shortcuts over snow piles and areas where snow and ice removal is not feasible can be hazardous. Look ahead when you walk; a sidewalk completely covered with ice may require travel along its grassy edge for traction.
5. When given no choice but to walk on ice, consider the following:
 - Take short steps or shuffle for stability.
 - Bend slightly, walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible.
 - Be prepared to fall, if at all possible.
 - If you fall, fall with sequential contacts at your thigh, hip, and shoulder to avoid using your arms to protect against breakage.
 - Bend your back and head forward so you won't slam your head on the pavement as your feet shoot out from under you.

Finally, when entering buildings, remove snow and water from footwear to prevent creating wet slippery conditions indoors. Floor mats should be placed at each entrance to wipe off wet shoes and boots. If not, contact your Building Coordinator to arrange for floor mats to be placed at the entrances of your building.

Have the custodian keep the hallway tile floors of your building free from water puddles. Custodial staff should also keep doorways and steps to your building free from snow and ice.

Lastly, use handrails on stairs or in stairwells, especially on wet winter days.