

WINTER WEATHER



Are you aware of and prepared for the hazards of winter? As we enter the winter weather season with rain, snow, and frigid temperatures, cities are encouraged to stay safe, anticipate unsafe conditions, and remain vigilant by utilizing safe work practices. From employee injuries to property damage due to burst pipes, the costs associated with winter-related damage can be astronomical.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends the following for [staying safe in extreme cold](#):

- Know the symptoms of cold stress, reddening skin, tingling, pain, swelling, leg cramps, numbness, and blisters.
- Dress properly; wear at least three layers of loose-fitting clothing, insulated gloves and boots, and cover your head.
- Monitor your physical condition and that of your coworkers for warning signs and symptoms of chilblains, frostbite, hypothermia, and trench foot.
- Stay dry and pack extra clothes; moisture can increase heat loss from the body.
- Take frequent breaks in warm, dry areas such as inside a vehicle or a sheltered or heated area.
- Drink warm liquids.
- Use appropriate footwear that provides adequate traction. A slip occurs when there is too little friction between your footwear and the walking surface, so proper footwear rather than dress shoes is critical to prevent these injuries. Traction devices or non-slip shoe appliances are available in the marketplace that significantly improve contact with the walking surface.
- Provide moisture-absorbent mats, rugs, or runners at building entrances to reduce wet and slippery floors.
- Walk cautiously, shorten your stride, and walk slowly.
- Pay attention to your surroundings and know your working conditions.
- Immediately clean up spills and leaks.
- Report hazardous conditions to a manager or supervisor.
- Ensure lighting conditions are appropriate for the work area.
- Use handrails on stairways where available.
- Law enforcement personnel should review their department's pursuit policy to prevent injuries during foot pursuits.
- Avoid downed power lines caused by ice accumulation.

Injuries due to slips and falls become more prevalent during inclement weather. KLC encourages everyone to utilize the following safe work practices:

Vehicle accidents are one of the leading causes of work-related injuries to KLC-insured members.

WINTER WEATHER HAZARD ALERT

Hazardous road conditions involving snow and ice significantly increase this risk; therefore, the use of vehicles should be avoided when possible. If vehicle use is required, please use appropriate safe operating precautions, including:

- Significantly increase your following distance to at least 6 seconds.
- Drive slowly to account for lower traction. Do not make sudden movements.
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly. It takes longer to slow down on icy roads.
- Focus on driving; do not become distracted by cell phones, radios, or other visual, cognitive, or manual distractions.
- Do not use cruise control.
- Check your wiper blades and windshield washer fluid.
- Conduct a pre-trip inspection of your vehicle, including tire pressure and lights. Ensure windows and mirrors are defrosted and headlights/taillights are visible.

The winter weather season can also bring about property and liability claims. So, it is important to take preventative measures to prepare the interior and exterior of your facilities. We recommend establishing clear protocols for responding to weather-related emergencies and implementing a plan for all facilities that, at a minimum, address areas susceptible to freezing temperatures. The following checklist will help identify and address winter weather concerns.

Winter Weather Checklist

- Monitor winter forecast and inform employees of inclement weather.
- Establish a routine for inspecting facilities on a daily or weekly basis to ensure a minimum temperature is maintained to prevent freezing.
- Assess exterior lighting, especially around entrances and in high-traffic areas. Winter brings earlier sunsets and darker days. Outdoor lighting is essential for property safety.

- Keep parking lots and sidewalks surrounding the building free of snow and ice. Shovel and keep salt on the ground to prevent slips and falls.
- Shut off and drain irrigation systems.
- Turn off water to outside hose bibs, remove hoses, and drain the pipes.
- Locate and label water shut-off valves.
- Regularly monitor water meters for unusual activity. This could indicate a leak.
- Install water detection, water flow monitoring, and automatic shut-off sensors.
- Inspect the outside of your building for cracks and leaks, including windows and doors.
- Check your roof for damage and loose shingles.
- Inspect gutters and ensure they're secured to the building and draining properly.
- Conduct routine maintenance and servicing of boilers and HVAC systems prior to inclement weather.
- Inspect your building's insulation for holes or compromised areas that could cause heat loss. Pay special attention to roofs, weather stripping, plumbing insulation, and unheated areas, such as attics.
- Ensure extension cords and space heaters are used in accordance with manufacturers' safety instructions.
- Remove or trim trees that could damage property during a snow or ice event.

Your safety and the safety of those you serve constitute our loss control mission. By following this comprehensive checklist, you can prevent or significantly reduce the likelihood of property and liability claims during winter weather events. For additional information check out KLC's website for loss control resources or contact your loss control representative.



Questions? KLC is here to help!

Please contact Aaron Parrish (aparrish@klc.org) or Ben Cook (bcook@klc.org) with KLC Loss Control at 800.876.4552 or visit klc.org for more information.



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