

Avoiding Slips and Falls during Wet Winter Storms

Winter storms can produce heavy rainfall and strong wind gusts, putting those who navigate on or near buildings with smooth floor surfaces and parking lots in danger. Taking a few precautions will reduce exposure to slips and falls during these wet weather conditions.

Parking Lots and Walkways

Parking lots and walkways can become slippery when oil and debris accumulate and drainage is not adequate. Nearby tree limbs may become dangerous projectiles. Regular inspections should be conducted to identify and correct the following exposures, including:

- Automotive fluids and other liquids are removed from pavement to reduce slip and falls
- Storm water drains are clear
- Trees and trimmed with dead and broken limbs removed
- Potholes evenly filled
- Broken asphalt repaired
- High-visibility paint clearly identifies traffic direction, walkways, curbs and wheel stops
- Parking lot is well-lit and in good condition
- Walkways are well-lit with timers turning on at dusk

Entrances

Employees and visitors entering and exiting the buildings are at a risk for same-level slips and falls during increment weather. Transitioning from wet asphalt or concrete to a smooth/non-porous wet surface is a hazard in waiting. Without adequate protection, the floors have limited friction and become slick. Consider the following precautions to reduce injuries:

- Maintain drainage and provide false floors, platforms, nonslip mats or floor surfaces, or other dry standing places where practicable.
- Use mats that do not bunch/ripple.
- Apply floor treatments, such as abrasive floor coatings, chemical etches and cleaners, and floor waxes to increase friction on otherwise slippery walking surfaces.
- Apply abrasive tapes or strips to walking surfaces where liquids are likely to accumulate or there is a greater hazard such as near water fountains, entrances, showers, sinks/basins, ramps and in food preparation areas.
- Encourage students and faculty to wear slip-resistant footwear.
- Promptly dry mop floors when they become wet.
- Use prudent housekeeping procedures such as mopping only one side of a passageway at a time.
- Provide warning signs for wet floor areas. Signs should be ample height to avoid becoming a tripping hazard.
- Entrances should be kept clear at all times.
- Assure gutters/downspouts do not exit near entrances/doors.

This Tribal First Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice. For more information on this topic, please contact Tribal First Risk Control Consulting at (888) 737-4752 or riskcontrol@tribalfirst.com.