

December 2024

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2024-12-02 Winter Weather Tips

Winter weather presents hazards including slippery roads/surfaces, strong winds and environmental cold. Employers must prevent illnesses, injuries, or fatalities, by controlling these hazards in workplaces impacted by winter weather.

OSHA and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)) are working together on a public education effort aimed at improving the way people prepare for and respond to [severe weather](#). This page is designed to help businesses, and their workers prepare for winter weather, and to provide information about hazards that workers may face during and after winter storms.

Preventing Slips on Snow and Ice

To prevent slips, trips, and falls, employers should clear snow and ice from walking surfaces, and spread deicer, as quickly as possible after a winter storm. When walking on snow or ice is unavoidable workers should be trained to:

- Wear footwear that has good traction and insulation (e.g. insulated and water resistant boots or rubber over-shoes with good rubber treads)
- Take short steps and walk at a slower pace to react quickly to changes in traction

Preventing Falls When Removing Snow from Rooftops and Other Elevated Surfaces

OSHA's Hazard Alert, **Snow Removal: Know the Hazards Pamplet**, and **winter weather**

webpages provide guidance to employers on how to prevent serious injuries and fatalities.

Employers should consider options to avoid working on roofs or elevated heights, plan ahead for safe snow removal and must:

- Provide required fall protection and training when working on the roof or elevated heights
- Ensure ladders are used safely (e.g. clearing snow and ice from surfaces)
- Use extreme caution when working near power lines
- Prevent harmful exposure to cold temperatures and physical exertion

Working Safely in Cold Weather Winter weather can expose outdoor workers to frostbite, hypothermia, and cold stress, all of which can be fatal. It is important to know the wind chill temperature to better prepare and perform the work safely. Follow these work practices to stay safe in cold weather:

- 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.
- Stay dry and pack extra clothes; moisture can increase heat loss from the body.
- Take frequent breaks in warm, dry areas.
- Drink warm liquids.

For more safety tips, visit OSHA's Winter Weather page.

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2024-12-09 TBT Warning Lines

This toolbox talk explains construction-industry best practices for using a warning line to alert workers that they are approaching an unprotected edge of a roof, floor, or other work surface.

This information applies to all trades except those that do roofing work – roofing work means “hoisting, storing, applying, and removing roofing materials and equipment.” When doing roofing work, you can use a warning line for fall protection only if you follow the requirements in 1926.502(f), Warning Line Systems, and WAC 296-155-24615 (4), Warning line systems.

What is a warning line?

A warning line is a barrier such as rope, wire, or chain that warns workers they are approaching an unprotected roof, floor, or other work surface edge.

How do you set up a warning line?

Set up the warning line so that it keeps workers at least 15 feet back from the unprotected edge. This “setback” distance must eliminate the exposure and the risk that a worker could fall over the edge. You may need to increase the distance to eliminate the risk in some situations. Factors such as weather, visibility, the slope and condition of the work surface, the work performed, materials handled, and the experience and supervision of the workers can increase the risk of a fall – even at a 15-foot setback. The correct setback distance eliminates the exposure and the risk of a fall.

Never use a warning line as a substitute for a guardrail. Use a guardrail or another fall protection system described in WAC 296-155-24615, Fall Restraint Specifications.

Industry (all trades) best practices include the following:

- The work surface should be relatively flat with a slope of 4”:12” or less
- The warning line should be 34-39 inches above the work surface
- The warning line should be rope, wire, or chain
- Avoid using plastic tape for a warning line
- Workers should be able to feel the line if they back up against it, even if they’re wearing heavy clothing
- The warning line should be flagged at least every 6 feet with high-visibility material and have warning signs that are visible to workers

- Stanchions that support the warning line should be able to withstand a force of at least 16 pounds, applied horizontally in the direction of the unprotected edge, without tipping over
- No workers can enter the area between the warning line and the unprotected edge unless they are protected by a fall protection system described in WAC 296-155 Part C-1, Fall protection requirements for construction
- When there are multi-trades (roofer and other trades) on the roof working at the same time, all should either use the 15' warning line, or there should be two distinct lines (color coded) at trade-specific distances
- Roofers performing roofing work are allowed 6' set back from the leading edge and all others 15'
- Access and egress are also crucial to workers' safety
- If roof access is only available outside the warning line, an access path should be created out of warning lines to guide workers safely to the working area
- Once inside the warning line system, a means of closing off the access path where it joins the warning line system should be in place
- Maintaining warning line systems is critical to their effectiveness
- Lines must be regularly inspected and maintained, and any damaged or worn components must be replaced immediately

Where can you learn more about warning lines?

Federal OSHA rules:

- 1926.502, Fall protection systems, criteria, and practices
- 1926.502(f), Warning line systems

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2024-12-16 TBT

Housekeeping

Importance of Good Housekeeping On Jobsites

It helps in preventing accidents, improving productivity, and ensuring the well-being of all personnel on site.

A clean and organized workplace is less likely to contribute to slip, trip, and fall hazards, which are among the most common causes of workplace injuries in the construction industry.

Common Hazards Due to Poor Housekeeping

Slips, Trips, and Falls

These can occur when materials, tools, and debris are left lying around. Imagine walking through the site and tripping over a piece of lumber or [slipping](#) on spilled oil.

Such incidents can lead to severe injuries, ranging from minor bruises to serious fractures or even worse.

Fire Hazards

Accumulation of flammable materials, like wood shavings, packaging materials, and solvents, can significantly increase the risk of a fire breakout. A small spark can lead to a major incident if proper housekeeping practices are not followed.

Obstructed Pathways

Blocked aisles, stairs, and exits not only make it difficult to move materials and equipment around but also pose a significant risk during emergencies. In the event of a fire or other emergency, clear pathways can mean the difference between a safe evacuation and a tragic outcome.

Falling Objects

Poorly stacked materials can become unstable and fall, posing a risk to anyone working below or around the stacked items. Proper storage and organization can prevent these accidents.

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2024-12-23- TBT Holiday

Safety Tips

??Safety First: Holiday Season Safety Tips for Construction Sites ??

As the holiday season approaches, construction sites continue bustling with activity. However, this festive time also brings unique challenges to job sites, from harsh winter weather to holiday-related distractions. It's crucial for contractors, site managers, and workers to prioritize safety. Here are essential tips to ensure everyone stays safe and productive during this holiday season.

1. Enhanced Weather Precautions ????

The winter months often bring extreme weather conditions such as snow, ice, and strong winds, which can significantly impact construction sites. These conditions not only make work more challenging but also increase the risk of accidents and injuries.

Key Tips:

- **Regular Weather Monitoring:** Stay updated with weather forecasts and plan accordingly.
- **Snow and Ice Management:** Implement measures to clear snow and ice, especially on walkways and scaffolding.
- **Appropriate Gear:** Ensure workers have access to proper winter clothing, including insulated gloves, waterproof boots, and warm headgear.

2. Adjusted Work Schedules and Fatigue Management ?

The holiday season often leads to altered work schedules, with some workers putting in extra hours to meet year-end deadlines. This can lead to increased fatigue, which is a major safety concern.

Managing the Strain:

- **Realistic Scheduling:** Avoid over-scheduling and ensure adequate rest periods for staff.
- **Encourage Breaks:** Regular breaks can help manage fatigue and maintain high safety standards.
- **Awareness Training:** Educate workers about the signs of fatigue and the importance of rest.

3. Mental Health and Stress Awareness ?

The holiday season can be emotionally taxing, contributing to stress and mental health issues among workers. Stress can distract workers from safety protocols, increasing the risk of accidents.

Supporting Worker Well-being:

- **Open Communication:** Encourage workers to speak openly about their stress or mental health issues.
- **Flexible Scheduling:** Where possible, offer flexible schedules to accommodate holiday commitments.
- **Access to Support:** Provide information about mental health resources and support services.

4. Site Security During Off-Days ??During the holidays, construction sites may be left unattended for extended periods. This can make them targets for theft or vandalism. Security Measures:

- **Secure Equipment and Materials:** Ensure all valuable items are locked up or removed from the site.
- **Surveillance Systems:** Consider installing cameras or alarm systems for added security.
- **Regular Check-ins:** Arrange for periodic site visits to monitor for any unusual activity.

5. Fire Safety and Decorations ?

While decorations can boost morale, they can also pose fire risks, especially on construction sites with various flammable materials.

Safe Decorating:

- **Use Non-Flammable Decorations:** Use materials that are less likely to catch fire.
- **Electrical Safety:** Ensure any lights or electrical decorations are safely installed and meet all safety standards.
- **Clear Escape Routes:** Decorations should never block emergency exits or escape routes.

6. Ensure Adequate Lighting

With shorter days and longer nights during the holiday season, ensuring adequate lighting on construction sites becomes crucial for worker safety and productivity. Proper lighting is not only a matter of convenience but a critical safety measure to prevent accidents and ensure tasks are completed effectively. Key Strategies:

Improve Visibility with Additional Lighting: Install bright, durable lights around the site, especially high-traffic areas where precision work is carried out. Focus on entry and exit points, walkways, and machinery operating zones.

Mobile Light Towers: Employ mobile light towers for flexibility. These can be moved around to different areas of the site as needed, providing essential lighting wherever it's required.

Personal Lighting for Workers: Encourage workers to wear headlamps. This hands-free option ensures personal safety and helps in performing tasks with precision. Wearable lights are a good option as they can be attached to safety vests or helmets. These can increase personal visibility and hence reduce the risk of accidents. **Safety should always be the top priority on construction sites**, and this becomes even more pertinent during the holiday season. By implementing these tips, construction managers can help ensure that their sites remain safe, secure, and productive during this festive time. Remember, a safe site is a productive and happy one, especially during the holidays.

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2024-12-30 TBT Safe Driving

Safe Driving

There will be 42 million Americans that are expected to take a holiday road trip this year, from Thanksgiving through the upcoming New Years Celebration! Driving can be convenient and less costly than air travel, but it can also be quite stressful, with traffic, weather conditions, and fellow holiday drivers to contend with.

S.C. Swiderski LLC wishes you the best during this holiday season, and cautions safety on the road. Please see these safe driving tips for staying safe during holiday driving:

- **Don't drink and drive.** If there will be drinking at your holiday get-together, choose a designated driver who will remain alcohol free.
- **Make sure the car is ready.** Be sure your vehicle is properly maintained, in good shape for travel, and ready for winter driving conditions.
- **Map your route** out ahead of time when possible. Have a plan and be aware of projected weather conditions.
- **Buckle up!** Ensure you and your passengers are properly restrained in seat belts and car safety seats.
- **Avoid fatigue.** Get a good night sleep the night before, take regular breaks, and share the driving if possible. If you are tired, pull off the road to a rest area.
- **Have an emergency plan.** Have a cell phone and charger with you so it can be used in case of an emergency. Keep the contact information for emergency roadside assistance handy.
- **Do not text while driving and minimize cell phone use** to keep your full attention on the road. Utilize a hands-free device if you need to use your cell phone.
- **Keep a safe following distance,** allowing for ample time to react to the traffic around you. If someone is tailgating you, allow them to pass. Don't try to compete with impatient and aggressive drivers.
- **Watch your speed.** Drive to the conditions and don't drive over the speed limit. Give yourself plenty of time to get to where you are going so you are not in a rush.
- **Remain calm.** Don't drive with road rage – This compromises the safety of yourself and the people around you.

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