



# State of Nevada

Department of Administration

## RISK-Y BUSINESS

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## Don't Slip Up

Falls on a level surface account for 20 percent of lost-work-time incidents in the United States. The good news is that you can take simple steps to prevent these accidents in your workplace.

The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) recommends that you look at four factors that can contribute to slip, trip, and fall hazards:

- 1. Worker factors.** Workers may create hazards by using equipment improperly, suffer from fatigue, or engage in risk-taking behaviors that put them at increased risk.
- 2. Machinery/equipment factors.** Machinery that is improperly designed or maintained may create a hazard. For example, a poorly designed piece of equipment could have projections near the floor that create a tripping hazard; a poorly maintained machine may leak hydraulic fluid, creating a slip hazard.
- 3. Environmental factors.** These could be seasonal or weather-related or they may result from poor maintenance of the overall environment.
- 4. Management practices.** All of the factors above can be affected positively or negatively by management practices. To prevent slips, trips, and falls, you should:

Pay attention to high-traffic areas. One of the more common hazards is changes in flooring surfaces, such as from carpet to tile.

Require appropriate footwear. Don't permit employees to wear inappropriate shoes for the weather or their work environment.

Clean up your act. All walking surfaces should be kept free of spills, and any other substance that may make the floor slippery.

Hang a sign. If workers must walk over slick or uneven surfaces, warn them with appropriate signage.

Take a report. Encourage workers to report any hazards they observe.

Light the way. Workers are more likely to take a misstep when lighting is poor.

## Safely Maintain Your Walking Program This Winter



Keeping up your walking program in winter will help you maintain your fitness level all year round. Getting out of the house can even help some individuals fight off the winter blues, known as seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. So try to make it outdoors at least once a day for a walk.

Be sure, however, to learn about the dangers of walking in the cold before you step out the door. Learning how to safely walk in the cold will help you avoid cold-related ailments and make your workout much more enjoyable. If you don't take certain precautions you can suffer accidental hypothermia or even frostbite.

To keep warm, wear layers of clothing. This traps air between layers, forming a protective insulation. Wearing a hat or cap can hold in 80 percent of the body's heat in cold weather. It is said that you lose more heat through your head than through any other part of your body.

The extremities, hands, feet, ears, and face are most vulnerable because your body decreases blood flow to these areas in order to keep your vital organs and muscles warm. These extremities are also the parts of the body most often left unprotected.

Mittens, not gloves, give your hands the best protection in cold weather, your fingers help keep each other warm. Wearing leather shoes or boots is better than nylon or canvas, and socks made of materials that absorb moisture will help keep your feet drier. Make sure your shoes or boots are large enough to provide plenty of space around your toes. This space will fill with warm air and that will insulate your feet and ward off frostbite. Always make sure your ears are covered as they are sensitive to low temperatures and can become frostbitten easily. When the wind chill factor is low, it may be a good idea to wear a ski mask or Orlon ski cap to protect your ears and face.

Now that you have the facts there is no reason to slip into inactivity or hibernate like a bear. Grab your shoes and warm clothing and stay on track in the winter months!

### PLEASE NOTE

If you are in a leased building and have a water issue such as a roof leak, please contact Buildings and Grounds.

Risk is only to be involved when worker's compensation claims become an issue or in the event of State-owned property/equipment damage.

- Before attempting to pass snow removal equipment, check direction of snow discharge to avoid snow and debris thrown from equipment. Remember that plows are wider than most vehicles and portions of the plow and blade may be obscured by blowing snow.
- Don't crowd the plow. Only pass snow removal vehicles when a safe, legal passing area is available and adequately clear of snow and/or treated with salt and sand.
- Don't travel beside a snowplow. They can shift sideways after hitting snow packs or drifts.
- When a plow approaches you, allow the plow room to operate by reducing speed and moving to the right side of the road if there is room to safely do so.
- Do not brake suddenly plows cannot stop as quickly as an automobile.

## SHARE THE ROAD



Defensive driving includes being aware of those employees that are out clearing our roadways. To avoid an encounter with NDOT's equipment operators, NDOT has provided the following tips to keep you safe –

### SNOWPLOW SAFETY:

- Use caution when following, passing or approaching snow removal equipment.
- Drive a safe distance behind snowplows. Plows often travel slower than other vehicles to remove snow, apply sand and liquid deicers and assist stranded vehicles.

Remember that a snowplow operator's field of vision is restricted. You may see them, but they may not see you. More winter driving tips can be found at: <http://www.nevadadot.com/safety/winter/tips.asp>



# WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Staying alert, slowing down and staying in control – are the keys to safe winter driving.

Before even starting your trip check your fluid levels – including your fuel tank and wiper fluids. Make sure your tires have adequate pressure and correctly rated for your driving conditions.

Slowing down means you should drive according to the highway and weather conditions. Decrease your speed and leave yourself plenty of room to stop. National Safety Council recommends allowing at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front of you.

Increase your visibility by keeping your lights and windshield clean. To help others see you - turn on your lights.

To avoid losing traction, turn off your cruise control and keep the car in low gear. When braking don't slam on the brakes rather use steady gentle pressure to avoid skidding.

Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.



## Workers' Comp Question of the Quarter:



**Can you give me more information about the process for referring an employee to rehabilitation when they are unable to return to their job after a work related injury?**

This information can be found on our website under the “Early Return to Work Program” link. This section addresses permanent disabilities, i.e., the injured worker is unable to return to the job he/she held before the injury occurred. This differs from temporary modified duty as alternative positions will need to be permanent and the 90 days will not apply.

State employees have re-employment rights to a position that they qualify for and for which their permanent limits do not preclude them from performing the essential functions. The positions must be at or below their pre-injury position grade level and are restricted to positions with the Department they were working in at the time of the injury. NAC 284.6013—284-6019. When an injured worker receives permanent limitations, the insurer (CCMSI) will send a formal letter to the agency for review of the possibility of reasonable accommodations or placement into an alternative position that will be available within 90 days.

If the agency indicates that neither of these two options is possible, then the insurer (CCMSI) will contact Risk Management's Early Return to Work program coordinator to set up a meeting with all parties to discuss the employee's options, to explain his/her rights to transfer or voluntarily demote and to review appropriate vacancies. From the date of this consultation the State, as the employer, will have 30 days to review vacancies, offer alternative employment or propose an “on-the-job” training opportunity. Once this 30 days period has elapsed, the Rehabilitation Counselor will pursue other rehabilitation options with the employee.

For more information and a flowchart on how this process works please go to the following link:  
<http://risk.state.nv.us/ERTW%20Program001.PDF>