



## **Weekly Safety Briefings**

Week 5 – January 31 – February 4, 2022

### ***Winter and the Workplace***

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#### **Introduction**

Many regions of the United States received a wave of snow and ice this past week and may not have felt fully equipped or prepared. Even for workplaces in the northern regions that experience winter weather on a yearly basis, it can be a major challenge. This week we will break down helpful tips for workplaces handling winter weather conditions.

#### **Monday – Winter is Coming...Preparations**

Preparing your workplace for the winter weather is very similar to preparing your home. Today we will discuss some common tips that are applicable to both.

- Check your equipment, inspect critical emergency and heating equipment prior to the arrival of severe weather.
- Have critical supplies on hand.
- Communicate early and often to prepare employees and family members on upcoming weather events.
- Have a response plan prepared and train the appropriate employees/family members.

#### **Tuesday – Winter is Here...What Next?**

Winter has arrived at your workplace, now what? Hopefully your facility has taken the proper preparation steps prior to the winter season, now is the time to take action. Today we will discuss tips for keeping the workplace safe during winter weather events.

- Maintain critical equipment, ensure preventative and routine maintenance is completed to ensure smooth operations.
- Have a schedule and procedure for keeping travel paths clear of ice and snow to prevent slips and falls.
- Use safe and appropriate snow removal equipment.
- Train and encourage employees on wearing proper winter safety attire such as effective footwear and warm clothing.
- Continue communication with employees on weather policies and updates so they stay informed.

#### **Wednesday – Walk Like a Penguin?!**

Slips and falls are the #1 cause of injury in the workplace and these incidents are often significantly increased during the icy winter months. Penguins are experts when it comes to walking on the ice so let's take some pointers from our feathered friends.

Penguins don't slip on the ice and here's why:

- They walk flat footed
- They take short steps
- They walk with their arms to their sides, not in their pockets
- They concentrate on maintaining balance

By following these simple steps, you too can walk like a penguin and prevent painful slips and falls on the ice.

#### **Thursday – Safety Tips for Winter Travel**

Although technology has enabled many to work remotely, most employees still need to travel safely to and from the workplace which can be extra challenging during winter weather events. Today we will discuss safety tips for safe travel in ice/snow conditions.

- Start out a little earlier for your trip
- Leave plenty of extra space between you and the vehicle in front
- Check all fluids, oil, coolant and windshield washer, replace as required



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- Check tire pressure when tires are cold, inflate tires to the recommended pressure
- Replace windshield wiper blades and purchase a good window scraper/brush
- Use care when entering or exiting vehicles, make sure you have firm footing and use the vehicle door or frame to brace/support yourself as much as possible
- Let someone know where you are going and when you will be back and always travel with your cellphone and a full gas tank
- If you get off the roads become stuck, attach something brightly colored to your car's antenna to make you more visible, stay in your vehicle and avoid over-exertion
- Stay warm but don't leave your car running, if snow plugs the vehicles exhaust system it can cause carbon monoxide gas to enter the vehicle cabin
- Pack an emergency safety kit for the trunk. Items to include:
  - o Blanket, extra clothing, gloves, hat, jumper cables, snack food and water, small shovel, flashlight with new batteries, kitty litter or ice bite for emergency traction, cell phone charger, and a whistle so you can catch the attention someone nearby

#### **Friday – Open Discussion**

This week we've shared several tips on keeping your workplace as safe as possible during winter weather events. Now let's open it up to the group to share your experiences.

- Have you ever experienced a winter weather related injury?
- Have you learned other tips for staying safe during the harsh winter season? Please share with the group.
- What are other steps your workplace can take to keep you and your coworkers safe during the winter season?