

# gibca SAFETY TOOLBOX TALKS

## Weather-Related Falls



This Toolbox Talk looks at one of the many causes of falls in construction: weather related falls.

Especially in cold weather, workers need to pay special attention to where you're walking. Walkways can become slippery due to wet weather, ice, snow, or wetness due to melting ice and snow.

A walkway or sidewalk cleared of snow, or looks like it has been salted, can still be a fall hazard. Black ice, dew, fog, and water vapor can form in a thin layer on just about any surface, creating an almost unseen fall hazard. Sometimes they are visible as wet spots on surfaces, and show up in the early mornings or shaded areas that see little sunlight. Again, cold weather increases the frequency of slippery surfaces.

### Ten tips to avoid falling on slippery surfaces, especially in cold weather:

1. Pay attention and watch your step!
2. Wear appropriate footwear with soles in good condition.
3. Bend your knees a little when walking to increase your body's stability. This can increase your traction and reduce your chance of falling.
4. Take shorter steps and walk with a slower gait. This will allow you more time to adjust to changing traction conditions.
5. Take special care when entering and exiting automobiles; use the vehicle for support.
6. When entering a building, remove as much snow, dirt, and moisture from your shoes as possible.
7. If your building entrance is slippery, take the necessary steps to get it cleaned up, protecting you and your fellow workers from falling.
8. Use handrails when climbing stairs.
9. Avoid overloading when carrying items. Heavy items may challenge your sense of balance. Ask for help to carry heavy or awkwardly shaped items. Use tools, such as a hand truck, to carry items if required.
10. Avoid rushing around. Plan ahead and try to leave a little earlier so that you can walk without distraction.