

In the Safety Zone™

A newsletter dedicated to safety awareness

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Don't Fall Victim (to Slip and Fall Injuries)

Slips and falls are a major cause of accidents on and off the job. American workers suffer injuries from falls on the job every year—a number of these related to slipping accidents. In fact, slips and falls are among the top causes of disabling work injuries. Although these types of accidents usually aren't fatal, they can result in serious injury to the body, like broken bones and back injuries.



Slipping and sliding means accidents and injuries

Unless you're ice skating or skiing, you don't want to fall victim to slipping and sliding. Weather-related slips and falls become a serious hazard as winter conditions often make for icy and wet surfaces outdoors. Even wet leaves or mud can create treacherous walking conditions. You want to do everything you can to prevent accidents and injuries—outside and in. Perhaps the best way to go about it is with a little increased awareness of your surroundings in the fall and winter months. Make the assumption that **every** road or surface could be hazardous and step or proceed with caution!

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Prevention

Most trips, slips and falls can be prevented, or at least can be made less severe. While various unsafe conditions can lead to these types of accidents, the best prevention is paying attention to what you're doing, where you're going, and what you encounter along the way. Here are a few things that you can do to avoid slips and falls:

Create a slip-free zone inside and out. Inside always clean up spills, drips and leaks immediately (even a little coffee spill on the floor can cause a slip and fall injury). Watch for signs or barriers to warn you when floors are wet, slippery or otherwise hazardous. In and around your home, put down mats on wet days near entryways to help keep floors dry. Outside, see to it that slippery spots are sanded or salted immediately. Always wear sensible shoes with nonskid or tread channeled soles to improve foot traction on bad weather days. Wipe your feet when coming in from the outside. Another way to prevent slips is to walk slowly, taking small steps on wet and slippery surfaces. And when exiting your car or truck—always watch your step! As truck drivers, practicing the **3-point rule** should be second nature! It is a tried and true method of avoiding slip and fall injuries when entering and exiting your cab.

Report slippery conditions. Always report a hazardous condition anywhere inside or outside a facility. That way maintenance can get to the scene quickly to remove or correct the hazard.

Preparation and Awareness are Key to Safe Winter Driving



Preparing yourself for winter weather in advance of its arrival will reduce the stress of this driving season. Winter weather and driving in snow and ice is difficult. It tests the skills of every driver. What sets a professional driver apart is the ability to critically observe and anticipate hazards. The professional driver knows that there are fundamental tasks that should be performed to ensure that every trip down the roads and highways during the winter season is a safe one.

These include:

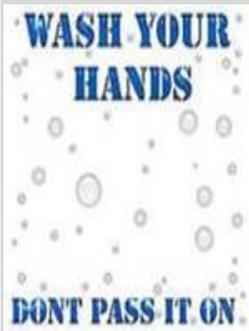
Personal safety preparation. Reduce risk of exposure to the elements by preparing a winter survival kit that includes a flashlight, extra batteries, extra warm clothes, gloves and snow boots. You should also have non-perishable food and water; a cell phone charger; first aid kit and a snow broom and ice scraper.

Pre and post-trip inspections. These steps are crucial to your safety under any conditions and even more so when weather conditions are more challenging. These inspections should always include checking your wiper blades, and fluid levels and tire pressure. The truck's spare tire should be ready for use. Always have adequate fuel. Visually inspect the vehicle's lights (headlights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers, etc.). Safely clean your windshield, side windows and mirrors before leaving every stop. Inspections need to be completed throughout road trips to ensure that the truck is road-ready.

Drive for conditions. Treacherous conditions dictate that you slow down. Drivers need more time to react in when visibility and traction are impaired. Drive slowly and increase your following distance –double your following distance in snowy conditions and triple it when the roads are icy. Look far enough ahead to be ready to react. Make sure others know you're there in low visibility areas. Maintain firm control of the steering wheel and brake and accelerate gently to reduce the chances of spin-outs.

Reduce Your Risk of Cold or Flu

With the cold and flu season in full swing, one of the best precautions you can take against cold and flu is to wash your hands frequently. It's not a guarantee that you won't get sick, but it can certainly help. When washing hands with soap and water, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) says that you should:



- Wet hands with clean running water (warm water if available) and apply soap.
- Rub hands together to make lather and scrub all surfaces. Pay particular attention to fingers, fingertips, and under fingernails where germs love to breed. Palms are heavy germ zones, too.
- Continue rubbing hands for 15-20 seconds.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry hands using a paper towel or air dryer.

Hand Safety

As truck drivers, your hands are valuable assets. Without your hands it would be extremely difficult to perform routine, simple tasks such as opening doors, using a pen, or tying your shoes. Your hands allow you to perform the most essential function of your job-driving! Hand injuries, even minor ones, can impair your ability to work productively.

Cuts and lacerations are the most common type of hand injury. They range in severity from a small laceration to broken bones. You also risk injury to your hands when you are exposed to sharp objects. Hands can also become jammed or lodged between spaces and objects while handling materials. These are commonly referred to as pinch points. Failure to use proper lifting techniques can also lead to hand injuries.

The most common causes of hand injuries are:

- Carelessness
- Lack of awareness
- Distractions
- Disregard for safety procedures

To minimize the risk of injuries, it's important to recognize hazards, follow safe work practices, and use protective equipment appropriate for the task you are performing. To reduce the risk of hand related injuries:

- Use your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Well fitted gloves provide flexibility and protection.
- Beware of pinch points and areas that the hand can get lodged. You should also avoid wearing jewelry and keep long sleeves buttoned.
- Never remove machine safeguards.
- Make certain loads are balanced before lifting.
- Whenever possible, use tools to do the work that your hands would otherwise do.

