



Preventing slips on snow and ice



Slips on snow and ice can lead to significant injury. As winter approaches, make sure your organisation isn't vulnerable to unwanted insurance claims.

An organisation can be held liable if they take no action to clear snow and ice to stop people slipping and getting injured on their premises. They can also be held liable if they do attempt to clear the snow and ice – but someone still gets hurt.

Therefore, organisations must develop a comprehensive policy for preventing such injuries. This should include identifying those areas most affected by ice and most used by pedestrians – usually including car parks, entrances, shortcuts and shaded areas, where ice thaws slowly.

Using rock salt to grit areas used by pedestrians will form a core part of any snow and ice policy. The salt needs time to dissolve into the moisture on the ground and the best time to grit is early in the evening before frost forms, or early in the morning before pedestrians use walkways.

Finally, it is crucial that organisations monitor that their snow and ice policy is being implemented effectively. This includes creating a robust incident investigation process that includes keeping a copy of the weather forecast for the time of any incident, along with a record of when the decision to grit was made, and why.

Best practices

- 1 Continually monitor the temperature/weather so that you know when to take action.
- 2 Ensure there is enough lighting for pedestrians to spot icy patches.
- 3 Install canopies over doorways to keep them dry and free of ice.
- 4 Ensure that walkways are well drained to remove standing rainwater.
- 5 If gritting is delayed, take interim measures such as cordoning off high-risk areas and putting up signs.
- 6 Don't grit shortcuts that people use. If a shortcut is identified, consider converting it into a proper walkway, or take steps to stop people using it.
- 7 There is no definitive guide on how much salt to use, but roads normally receive 10–15 grams per m² when freezing temperatures are forecast, and 20–40 grams per m² when ice and snow is on the ground.
- 8 Train relevant staff on the decision-making process relating to gritting, and how it should be applied to the location they are responsible for. They need formalised responsibilities for implementing the snow and ice policy, which should be documented (for claims management purposes).

Legal requirements

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 impose duties on employers to assess the risks associated with slips and trips and take preventative action.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 also require employers to ensure floors are not slippery. The Approved Code of Practice for the regulations suggests that arrangements should be made to minimise the risks from snow and ice, including gritting, snow clearing and closure of hazardous routes.

Finally, The Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 requires an occupier to take reasonable care to ensure visitors are reasonably safe in using the premises for the purposes by which they are permitted to be there.

Find out more

[Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992. Approved Code of Practice HSE Books 1992, L24 ISBN 9780717604135](#)

[Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 HMSO 1957, ISBN 0108501981](#)

Further RMP Resources and Articles

For access to further RMP Resources you may find helpful in reducing your organisation's cost of risk, please access the [RMP Resources](#) or [RMP Articles](#) pages on our website. To join the debate follow us on our [LinkedIn](#) page. Additionally we have specific discussion groups for the [Education](#), [Emergency](#) and [Government](#) sectors.

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PSSI-01-17