



GNY Loss Control Guide:

## **Winter Slips and Falls**

Snow and Ice Mitigation Program Assessment and Program Management Tools

During winter months, slips and falls are a leading cause of liability claims for property owners and managers. A proactive approach to preventing slips and falls includes implementing an effective snow and ice mitigation program.

This guide provides property owners and managers steps for creating an effective snow and ice mitigation program when some or all of their snow removal is completed by personnel employed at the property. This guide will discuss pre-season, in-event and post-event procedures for mitigating winter slip and falls hazards.

Included is a tool for logging in-event service and a checklist to assess your program.

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## What does an effective snow and ice mitigation program include?

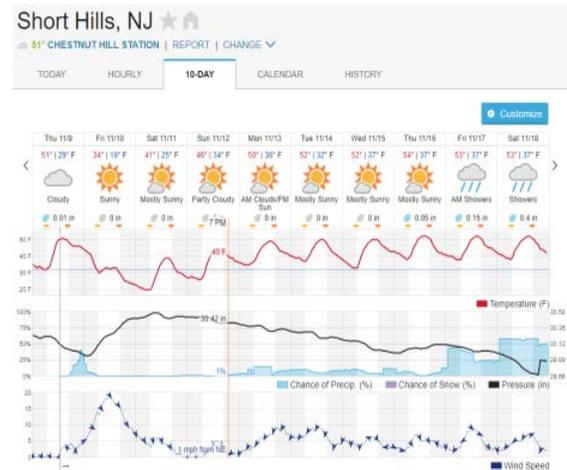
- I. Pre-season procedures
  - a. Contract procurement – Snow plowing and snow removal
    - i. Execute standard contract language with effective risk transfer language in your contractual agreements with snow removal contractors.
    - ii. Collect certificates of insurance and policy declaration page from contractor
  - b. Pre-season inspections / site surveys – stake property, identify and repair existing issues.
  - c. Site engineering / layout plan
  - d. Site specific plan – select areas to relocate snow
  - e. Acquired appropriate safety materials and inventory of equipment
  - f. Employee training
- II. In-event\*
  - a. Employees dispatched
  - b. Documentation of arrival time, crew on site, snow depth, conditions, departure time, pictures upon arrival and departure.
    - i. What was performed
    - ii. What was not performed
    - iii. Incident reporting
- III. Post-event
  - a. Record keeping
  - b. Monitor and address thaw and re-freeze
  - c. Clear additional snow accumulation
  - d. Monitor emergency access areas and frequently traveled areas
  - e. Maintain complaint and accident logs and address hazards identified

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# What approaches can be taken towards mitigating snow and ice related slip and fall claims?

## Pre-Season Best Practices: Develop a Snow/Ice Removal Plan

**Determine Who Is In Charge:** For each site, there should be a manager or point person who will oversee the snow & ice removal process before, during and after a storm. The role of the manager includes completing a pre-season site survey, determining services to be performed, training, monitoring weather, dispatching employees, monitoring post event conditions and documentation, and where applicable the liaison with snow removal contractor.



### Plowing Directions and Storage



**Develop a Site Engineering / Layout plan:** The manager or contractor should complete a pre-season site survey using a map of the property to determine property boundaries and physically stake the property, areas to be serviced, locations of hazards / obstacles, identify areas to relocate snow, determine the pattern or direction to best move snow as well as spread salt and other deicers.

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**Selecting Areas to Re-Locate Snow:** Snow piles should be located in areas that: minimize the flow of water that may refreeze, do not impede standard traffic patterns, do not create visual obstructions, and do not create an attractive nuisance. Avoid piling the snow where children play, to limit temptation to climb on snow piles.



**Inventory and Equipment:** The site manager should document the type of equipment, age, quality and condition of equipment, as well as who is responsible for maintaining it. Take an inventory before and after each storm and keep a minimum amount of materials needed for at least 5 storms.



**Identify and Repair Existing Site Issues:** Any existing issues should be addressed during the pre-season site survey and repaired prior to the start of the season. Uneven / cracked sidewalks, potholes / gaps in parking lots, damaged curbs should all be noted and repaired prior to the season. Obstacles or hazards such as down spouts & drains, fire hydrants, handicap areas should be noted on the site plan.

See sample walking surface condition checklist attached.



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**Training:** Training should be documented, include all employees who are involved in snow removal and completed annually. Training should include: equipment specific training, job task specific training, reporting procedures, emergency response, basic on site equipment repair and reporting procedures, and review of any state laws pertaining to operating and transporting equipment and snow removal in general.



## Pre-Storm Best Practices

**Determine Start Times and Areas:** Prioritize start times and areas based on the schedules/routines of tenants and event times. Prioritization should consider areas that have high foot traffic, severity hazards including sloped sidewalks and stairs, and resident arrival and departure times. Be sure to give these areas extra attention when cleaning and treating.



**Apply Pre-Treatments:** Watch the weather to know when to expect storms and other hazardous conditions. Treat areas such as parking lots, sidewalks, and stairs before conditions become dangerous. Pre-treatments can prevent snow and ice from sticking to surfaces, as well as start the melting process early.

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# Sample Snow Log

## SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL/TREATMENT LOG

Name of Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	ACTION	SIDWALK OR WALKWAY	STAIRS OR STEPS	DRIVEWAY	PARKING AREA	ROOF	EMPLOYEE	COMMENTS
			Shoveled <input type="checkbox"/> Sand <input type="checkbox"/> Plowed <input type="checkbox"/> Cinders <input type="checkbox"/> Ice Melt <input type="checkbox"/>							
			Shoveled <input type="checkbox"/> Sand <input type="checkbox"/> Plowed <input type="checkbox"/> Cinders <input type="checkbox"/> Ice Melt <input type="checkbox"/>							
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Snow Removal Log Sample

To reduce slips and falls and the often accompanying lawsuits know your contractor and use risk transfer tactics that include hold harmless, indemnification and insurance procurement agreements. Ask your agent for GNY’s guide on Transferring Risk for additional information.

## Additional Resources

- [SIMA](#)
- [ASCA](#)
- [ANSI](#)

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**Snow and Ice Mitigation: Best Practices Assessment – IN-HOUSE SNOW & ICE REMOVAL**

Yes	No	N/A	IN-HOUSE SNOW & ICE REMOVAL PROCEDURES
			<b>PRE-SEASON</b>
			Manager/Point Person In Charge
			Professionally reviewed contracts, COI and Policy Deck Page for effective risk transfer
			Site Engineering Plan/Layout Of Premises
			Areas Identified to relocate/pile snow to minimize refreeze issues
			Inventory of equipment (Type, Quantity, Age, Condition, Backup/Breakdown Plans, Mechanic on site or on call)
			Materials On-Hand & Needed (Estimate materials needed for 2-5 storms)
			Existing Site/Building Issues (i.e. Gutter downspouts draining directly onto walkways/parking lots, pre-existing damages, cracked/uneven parking lot/walkways)
			Employee Safety & Training
			<b>PRE-STORM</b>
			Best times and locations to start (i.e. Residents leave early for work, Store Hours)
			Apply anti-icing pre-treatments? (Materials/Labor savings)
			Extra supply of salt/sand for tenants
			24/7 Contact information for tenants
			<b>POST-STORM</b>
			Documented Snow Logs
			Electronic Reporting Systems (i.e. Digital Photos/Videos)
			Post Storm Inspection Process/Follow-Up
			Salt Application (Minimize damage to landscaping/turf, walkways, parking lots)
			Complaint Log
			Accident Log

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### Sample Walking Surface Condition Checklist

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_

Location/Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

HAZARDS TO CHECK	OK	N/A	NEEDS REPAIR	LOCATION/COMMENTS
<b>SIDEWALKS/WALKWAYS</b>				
Walking Surfaces Smooth & Even (depressions, cracks, holes, raised edges, Loose pavers/bricks) ( less than 1/2 Inch deviation)				
Walkway free of tripping hazards? (cords, hoses, etc.)				
Do Grates, Drains, Utility Plugs, Valves or other objects protrude 1/2" or greater?				
Downspouts/Drains positioned to discharge away from walkways?				
Ground Surface/Grassy areas next to walkways even/level and free from drop-offs or holes?				
Rocks, sand, dirt or other debris accumulating on the walkways?				
Areas of ponding water 1/4" deep or more? (layer of mud may indicate ponding problem)				
Tree Limbs, bushes, plants posing an obstruction?				
<b>PARKING LOTS/ROADWAYS</b>				
Parking areas free of potholes, depressions or damaged/uneven surfacing?				
Are curbs in good condition with even transition to sidewalk?				
Are wheel stops, curbs, crosswalks and speed bumps well marked?				
Is slip-resistant paint used for all pavement markings?				
<b>STAIRWAYS/RAMPS</b>				
Are handrails present and in good condition?				
Steps in good condition (cracked/uneven, loose)				
<b>OTHER:</b>				

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