



# SAFETY GUIDE



## Winter Weather Hazards/Precautions

**Shoveling Snow** - Shoveling snow can be a strenuous activity, particularly because cold weather can be taxing on the body. There is a potential for exhaustion, dehydration, back injuries, or heart attacks. During snow removal in addition to following the tips for avoiding cold stress, such as taking frequent breaks in warm areas, there are other precautions workers can take to avoid injuries. Workers should warm-up before the activity, scoop small amounts of snow at a time and where possible, push the snow instead of lifting it. The use of proper lifting technique is necessary to avoid back and other injuries when shoveling snow: keep the back straight, lift with the legs and do not turn or twist the body.

### Winter Weather ADVISORY



**Preventing Slips on Snow and Ice** - To prevent slips, trips, and falls, employers should clear walking surfaces of snow and ice, and spread deicer, as quickly as possible after a winter storm. In addition, the following precautions will help reduce the likelihood of injuries. Wear proper footwear when walking on snow or ice is unavoidable, because it is especially treacherous. A pair of insulated and water resistant boots with good rubber treads is a must for walking during or after a winter storm. Keeping a pair of rubber over-shoes with good treads which fit over your street shoes is a good idea during the winter months. Take short steps and walk at a slower pace so you can react quickly to a change in traction, when walking on an icy or snow-covered walkway.

**Removing Downed Trees** - Clearing downed trees is a critical job during severe winter weather conditions. It is usually urgent to remove downed trees that block public roads and damage power lines. Emergency crews are often tasked with clearing downed trees.

Potential hazards include electrocution by contacting downed energized power lines or contacting broken tree limbs in contact with downed energized power lines, Falls from heights and being injured by equipment such as chain saws. Workers should wear PPE that protect them from the hazards of the tree removal tasks. Workers using chainsaws and chippers to clear downed trees should use: gloves, chaps, foot protection, eye protection, fall protection, hearing protection and head protection.

**Using Powered Equipment like Snow Blowers** - It is important to make sure that powered equipment, such as snow blowers are properly grounded to protect workers from electric shocks or electrocutions. When performing maintenance or cleaning, make sure the equipment is properly guarded and is disconnected from power sources. Snow blowers commonly cause lacerations or amputations when operators attempt to clear jams with the equipment turned on. Never attempt to clear a jam by hand. First, turn the snow blower off and wait for all moving parts to stop, and then use a long stick to clear wet snow or debris from the machine. Keep your hands and feet away from moving parts. Refuel a snow blower prior to starting the machine; do not add fuel when the equipment is running or when the engine is hot.