

NEED TO KNOW

When Temperatures Drop, The Potential For Accidents Rises

The “Days of Shivery” are back, reports the *Farmers Almanac*. This time-trusted weather predictor is forecasting a winter with below average temperatures for about two-thirds of the nation and significant snow for many regions. That’s good news for winter sports enthusiasts, but potentially bad news for business owners.

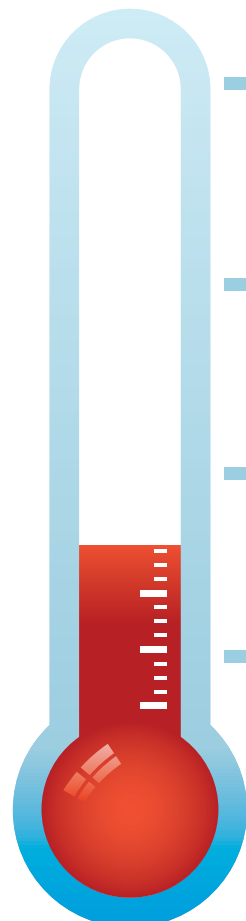
“Severe winter weather can lead to property damage, employee illness or injury and possible business closures,” notes EMC Senior Engineer Larry Readout, who shares the following winter preparedness tips from the Center for Food Security and Public Health:

- **Stay informed**—Monitor severe weather in your area at www.weather.gov.
- **Stockpile emergency supplies**—Including emergency power, sandbags, a shovel and road salt or ice melt.
- **Have a business emergency plan**—The plan should address shelter locations on your property, access to emergency power, backup heating sources and other actions to reduce losses in the event of a storm.
- **Promote safe driving skills**—Presentations, posters and internal communications are great ways to remind employees about driving techniques for wet or icy roads.
- **Eliminate the potential for slip and falls**—Check outdoor and indoor walkways for any slip

and fall hazards that could easily be exaggerated with snow and ice.

“There is nothing you can do to prevent winter from heading your way,” concludes Readout. “But there are a number of things you can do to prevent winter workplace accidents from heading in your direction.”

In addition to the tips above, see page 3 for a list of the many resources available on the Loss Control page at www.emcins.com



- **70%** According to OSHA, about 70% of injuries that occur during winter storms are the result of motor vehicle accidents.

- **1/3** Slips and falls are the third-leading cause of workplace injuries with a spike in the winter, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics.

- **20%** OSHA reports that 20% of winter workplace injuries are caused by prolonged exposure to the elements.

- **11,500** According to the Center for Injury Research and Policy, an average of 11,500 snow removal-related injuries and medical emergencies are reported every year.

NEW OSHA PROGRAM FOCUSES ON ISOCYANATES

Over the next three years, OSHA will focus outreach efforts and inspections on isocyanate hazards in an effort to reduce occupational illnesses, injuries and deaths. Workers in jobs such as painting, blowing insulation and the manufacturing and thermal degradation of polyurethane products may be exposed to these hazardous chemicals that can cause occupational asthma and other lung problems, as well as irritation of the eyes, nose, throat and skin. For more information about OSHA’s new national emphasis program for occupational exposure of isocyanates, visit www.osha.gov.

THE IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE ERGONOMICS

Half of office workers routinely experience work-related discomfort, and people in sedentary jobs are twice as likely to die from heart disease as active workers. These are just some of the consequences of not having an ergonomics program in place at your office as depicted by a recently published infographic from Humantech, Inc., a leader in workplace improvements. Download “10 Reasons Why You Need Office Ergonomics,” at www.ergopoint.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/10_Reasons_You_Need_office_Ergonomics1.pdf.

WINTER TIPS FOR PROPANE TANK SAFETY

The Propane Education and Research Council recommends taking some simple safety precautions prior to, during and after winter storms to reduce the possibility of property loss from propane tank damage, injury and even death. For example, make sure the company hired to perform snow removal is advised of the location of both aboveground and underground tanks, and use a broom rather than a shovel to clear snow from tanks. These and other safety tips are available at www.propanesafety.com.

Combatting Prescription Drug Abuse

Each year, substance abuse costs the United States billions of dollars in expenditures for health care, workplace injuries, disability payments and productivity losses.

by Kelsie Reeve, EMC Industrial Hygienist

The New Workplace Epidemic

Many employers think of substance abuse as only relating to alcohol and illicit drugs, but because of their ease of accessibility, misuse of prescription drugs is among the fastest growing substance abuse problems in the workplace.

- Prescription drugs are the third most commonly abused category of drugs, behind alcohol and marijuana (National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence).
- The misuse and abuse of prescription painkillers were responsible for more than 475,000 emergency room visits in 2009, a number that nearly doubled in the last five years (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration Services).
- More than 12 million people reported using prescription painkillers nonmedically in 2010 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration Services).

Preventing And Treating Prescription Drug Abuse

Substance abuse should be viewed as a chronic, manageable condition similar to other chronic diseases (e.g., diabetes and cardiovascular disease) that are targeted in a wellness program.

Because substance abuse of any kind threatens the health and safety of individuals, other employees, customers and your company, you need to establish a proactive and aggressive substance abuse and mandatory drug-free workplace program that incorporates the following components:

- Drug testing during the hiring process, random testing, suspicion testing and post-accident testing
- Access to an employee assistance program that provides short-term counseling and referral services for employees dealing with substance abuse problems
- Educational programs that make employees aware of the health and other dangers related to prescription drug abuse
- A supportive environment in which employees dealing with prescription drug abuse can seek confidential advice about treatment options
- Training programs for supervisors and managers about ways to identify, report and respond to prescription drug abuse situations

Prevention Begins With Information

As with other health conditions, the more information you have about prescription drug abuse, the better you will be able to provide a safer and healthier workplace for employees. Count on EMC® to provide valuable resources that can answer wellness or injury management questions and guide you in the right direction to help manage substance abuse and establish a drug-free workplace.



67% of human resource professionals surveyed believe that substance abuse/education is one of the most serious issues they face in their company.

(Hazelden Foundation)

INSIGHTS ONLINE



SCHOOLS

Improving Bus Driver Health

The American National Standards Institute has released a revised standard requiring service buses to have an ergonomic and comfortable driver's seat. Learn more about reducing musculoskeletal disorders and helping drivers focus on their duties and the road.

Reducing Low Back Injuries For School Teachers

Teachers face a number of low back pain risks as a result of their day-to-day activities in the classroom. Learn what teachers can do to reduce the severity of this common workplace injury.



PETROLEUM MARKETERS

Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel Hazard

The removal of sulfur and other compounds in ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel increases its ability to store a static charge, which could result in a fire or explosion. The Association of Equipment Manufacturers offers a best practices bulletin about this risk.

Emergency Action Plans For Hazardous Spills

Well-developed emergency action plans (EAP) and proper employee training will result in fewer and less severe injuries and less damage to structures during emergencies involving hazardous spills. Use OSHA's checklist to help develop your comprehensive EAP.

Get The Cold Hard Facts About Reducing Winter Losses

The best place to start preparing for winter weather is www.emcins.com. Select **Loss Control** to access information about how to help prevent everything from winter driving accidents to slips and falls, cold stress injuries and illnesses to snow removal mishaps, and ice dams to sprinkler system malfunctions. You'll also find a complete video library for safety training meetings, as well as posters to make employees aware of winter slip and fall hazards. Before winter hits, be sure to visit the Loss Control section on www.emcins.com for cold hard facts about reducing severe weather losses.

Some of the tech sheets available at www.emcins.com:



WINTER DRIVING



WINTER SLIP AND FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM



PROTECTION AGAINST SPRINKLER SYSTEM FREEZE



PREVENTING ICE DAMS



COMMERCIAL SNOW PLOW SAFETY



PROTECTING WORKERS IN COLD ENVIRONMENTS

Timely. Direct. Interactive.

The all-digital Loss Control Insights. Coming summer 2014.

Sign up today by visiting www.emcins.com/losscontrol and select Sign Up For Loss Control News in the bottom left corner. Or if you prefer, you can send your email address to your loss control representative or losscontrol@emcins.com, and we'll get you signed up!



CONTRACTORS

Protecting Workers From Cold Stress

Workers who are exposed to extreme cold may be at risk of cold stress, which can result in hypothermia and frostbite. Learn the symptoms and first aid treatments to protect your workers.

Risks In Green Building Construction

The design and construction of buildings using current sustainability practices do not always benefit construction workers' safety and health. Learn more from EU-OSHA's new fact sheet about the risks associated with new technologies and unfamiliar materials.



LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Hazmat Safety App For Emergency Responders

The first 30 minutes are the most crucial when responding to a hazmat situation. Learn more about a mobile app that quickly locates information regarding standard response procedures for gas and liquid pipeline incidents.

Responding To Combustible Dust Fires

Emergency responders face injury and sometimes death during operations in facilities with combustible dust. A new OSHA informational booklet explains the best practices for preincident operational procedures for responders.

On The Job With Larry Readout



A fall on a slippery floor could cost your organization \$10,000 or more, but according to EMC Senior Engineer Larry

Readout, investing as little as \$40 per square yard for walk-off mat tiles could reduce the likelihood of those falls.

"Walk-off mats are designed to hold about a gallon of water," explains Readout. "As a result, water will be less likely to pool beyond the entryway."

Readout offers the following recommendations for the effective use of walk-off mats:

- Industry best practices suggest a 60-foot walk-off area at the building entrance.
- Visually check walk-off mats for wear and tear throughout wet weather seasons.
- Make certain the edges of any walk-off mats are tapered to avoid trips caused by curling edges.
- Consider the advantages of walk-off mat tiles, which are easier to install, clean and replace. Tiles are also held in place with adhesive backing to reduce curling and can be configured to match the needs of any space.

"Organizations should also look at other areas that could result in slip and fall accidents," notes Readout. "These include uneven concrete in the parking area, the traction of workplace floors, the types of floor cleaning chemicals used and the use of slip-resistant footwear for employees."

Count on EMC® loss control experts like Readout to determine if you have adequate mat coverage, assess the condition of mats and recommend a matting strategy to help reduce slips and falls this coming winter and all year long.

For complete industry updates, visit www.emcins.com, select **Loss Control** on the homepage and then  **INSIGHTS ONLINE**.

THE
BEST
IN LOSS
CONTROL:

Sexual Harassment Training Available Online

Sexual harassment is one of the biggest human resource issues employers face today because of the cost and the physical and emotional impact to its victims.

Regardless of their operations, all organizations need to be committed to maintaining a workplace free of sexual harassment. EMC policyholders have access to two new online training courses to supplement their sexual harassment prevention program:

- **Sexual Harassment Prevention**—Designed for employees and supervisors, this program addresses examples of sexual harassment, its history and legal

precedents relating to sexual harassment in the workplace.

- **Sexual Harassment Prevention, Reporting and Investigation Procedures**—Designed for supervisors and upper management, this training program addresses the need for a sexual harassment policy, the elements of such a policy and the supervisor's responsibilities with regards to preventing sexual harassment.

Count on EMC® to provide free online training on sexual harassment and many other topics to help reduce potential losses in your workplace.



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LOSS CONTROL
INSIGHTS

