Winter Work: Slips, Ice, Cold Stress and Snow Hazards Stats and Facts



FACTS

- **Icy Surface Slip Risk:** Ice forms invisible “black ice” on walkways, steps, and equipment platforms, causing sudden loss of footing and hard-impact falls.
- **Snow-Covered Hazards:** Snow hides holes, uneven ground, debris, and elevation changes, increasing the chance of tripping or twisting injuries.
- **Cold Stress Onset:** Prolonged exposure to low temperatures reduces blood flow to extremities, leading to numbness, reduced grip strength, and delayed reactions.
- **Frostbite Damage:** Skin exposed to freezing temperatures can freeze quickly; loss of sensation makes workers unaware they’re being injured.
- **Hypothermia Progression:** Body temperature drops gradually during cold work, reducing mental clarity, coordination, and the ability to recognize danger.
- **Heavy Winter Clothing:** Bulky layers limit mobility and peripheral vision, making it harder to climb, turn, or maintain balance on slick surfaces.

STATS

- Slips and falls on ice and snow cause over 20,000 workplace injuries every year in the U.S. during winter months (BLS, injury reports).
- In the United States, winter-related slip injuries increase by up to 80% during freezing rain and snow events compared to dry conditions (NIOSH meteorological injury data).
- US cold stress-related injuries and fatalities averaged 22 deaths, 171 injuries, and over $484 million in property damage annually from 2020-2025, primarily affecting outdoor workers in snow and ice conditions.
- Canadian provinces report hundreds of frostbite hospitalizations each year during severe winter weeks, largely involving outdoor or roadside workers.
- In British Columbia, Canada, slip and fall injuries cost businesses 440,000 lost workdays each year (2020-2024), with 41,000 workers affected over six years due to ice and snow hazards.
- In the US, ice, sleet, or snow was responsible for 41.5% of weather-related workplace fatalities (2020-2024 average), with over 20,000 annual injuries requiring at least one day away from work.