

news & notes

SHOVELING SAFETY CHECKLISTS

Use these checklists to remember and follow safe shoveling techniques.

When shoveling snow, do you:

- Stretch before you start shoveling to warm up muscles?
- Pace yourself?
- Lift smaller amounts when snow is wet and heavy?
- Breathe in while lifting and out while throwing snow?
- Keep your feet shoulder width apart for balance?
- Hold the shovel close to your body for better leverage and less strain?
- Push snow rather than lift snow when possible?
- Bend your knees, keep your back straight, tighten your stomach muscles, and lift with your legs when lifting a shovelful of snow?
- Avoid twisting your body when throwing snow?
- Shovel stairs safely?
- Take breaks to allow muscles a chance to relax?
- Avoid smoking when shoveling?

To avoid slips, trips, and falls while shoveling, do you:

- Wear sturdy work boots with nonslip soles?
- Look where you're going as you move around?
- Look for obstacles?
- Take special care when moving through deep snow?
- Move slowly and slide your feet on icy surfaces?



"You hear something?"



2012 - February

Snow and Ice Removal *Clear out safely*

In many parts of the United States, February means snow and ice. In these areas, removing these treacherous elements from vehicles, steps, walkways, and roadways is crucial to getting around safely. The very removal of snow and ice itself can be very hazardous, however.

Potential hazards include:

- Back injuries
- Cold
- Equipment hazards
- Fatigue
- Noise
- Overexertion
- Poor visibility
- Slips, trips, and falls

Protect yourself from these hazards by taking these precautions:

- Assess conditions.
- Inspect equipment.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment, which may include:
 - Eye protection
 - Gloves
 - Hearing protection
 - Safety shoes
 - Warm clothing
 - Head protection

If you use a snow plow:

- Watch out for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Maintain good steering control.
- Approach snow piles at a safe speed.
- Look out for obstacles.
- Know your drop point for the plowed snow.

If you use a snowblower:

- Clear the area of debris.
- Direct snow away from people and vehicles.
- Don't exceed the blower's capacity.
- Always stop the engine before cleaning snow from blades or chute.
- Never put your hand in the discharge chute; clear away snow or debris with a shovel handle.
- Shut off engine and remove the spark plug wire before making repairs or mechanical adjustments.
- When clearing slopes, work up and down the slope, not across the face.
- Never leave a running snowblower unattended.
- Always handle and store gasoline safely.

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Dermatitis - Derma what?

Dermatitis is an inflammation of the skin from exposure to an irritant. The degree of inflammation is affected by the type of skin (pigmentation, dryness, and hairiness), age, sex, season of the year, history of previous skin disease or allergies, and personal hygiene.

Although one exposure to a substance may be enough to cause a skin reaction, workers can become sensitized through prolonged and repeated exposures to a substance. The delay can be short as a day, but can be as long as several months.

Generally, causes of dermatitis are chemical, mechanical, physical, or biological.

- Chemicals can produce reactions ranging from chemical burns to mild skin irritation.
- Mechanical causes of dermatitis include friction, pressure, and trauma resulting in abrasions, wounds, bruises, or foreign bodies (like glass fiber) getting into the skin.
- Physical agents that lead to dermatitis are excessive heat, cold, sunlight, ultraviolet light, X-rays or other ionizing radiation.
- Biological agents such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, poisonous plants, and insects can cause or complicate dermatitis.

Dermatitis is easier to prevent than to cure, so what can you do? If possible, eliminate skin contact with irritating chemicals and substances or substitute less toxic and irritating ones. Use protective clothing. Wash hands often with a mild, non-abrasive soap solution, and wash immediately if exposed to an irritating substance. Use protective creams.

The most important thing is for workers, who may be exposed to skin irritants, to be informed about the hazards, understand the precautions to take, and know what processes and equipment to use to avoid



Protecting Yourself from Cold Stress

Workers who are exposed to extreme cold or work in cold environments may be at risk of cold stress. Extremely cold or wet weather is a dangerous situation that can cause occupational illness and injuries such as hypothermia, frostbite, trench foot, and chilblains.

Hypothermia

A condition in which the body uses up its stored energy and can no longer produce heat. Often occurs after prolonged exposure to cold temperature. Early symptoms are: shivering, fatigue, loss of coordination, confusion and disorientation. Late symptoms include: No shivering, blue skin, dilated pupils, and loss of consciousness.

First Aid for Hypothermia

Request immediate medical assistance. Move the victim into a warm room or shelter and remove wet clothing. Warm the center of their body first - chest, neck, head, and groin, using an electric blanket; or use skin-to-skin contact under loose, dry layers of blankets, clothing, or towels. If conscious, warm beverages may help increase the body temperature. Do not give alcohol. Once temperature has increased keep them dry and wrapped in a warm blanket, including the head and neck.

Frostbite

An injury to the body that is caused by freezing, which most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes.

Symptoms include: Reduced blood flow to hands and feet; aching, numbness, tingling or stinging, bluish or pale, waxy skin.

First Aid for Frostbite

Get into a warm room as soon as possible. Unless necessary, do not walk on frostbitten feet or toes. Immerse the affected area in warm (not hot) water, or warm the affected area using body heat. Do not use a heating pad, fireplace, or radiator for warming. Do not massage the frostbitten area; doing so may cause more damage.

What a Pain in the Neck!

Use ergonomics to avoid neck strain

Whether you work in an office, on an assembly line, or in a factory, warehouse, or retail establishment, neck pain is a common hazard. Why? Because neck injuries have a number of common causes that stretch across industries, including:

- Reaching and stretching for items
- Constant twisting while performing job tasks
- Adjusting to inaccurate height of workstations
- Repetition of movements that stress the neck
- Prolonged awkward positions
- Forceful, jarring tasks
- Stressful job situations that cause neck tension

How can you avoid neck injuries caused by these situations?

- **Rearrange your work space** so that items are within reach without stretching, bending, or twisting.
- **Choose the right tool** for the job that minimizes excessive force or awkward positions to complete the task.
- **Alter your job tasks** to avoid constant repetition of potentially injurious movements.
- **Perform neck and shoulder exercises** to keep muscles strong and relaxed.
- **Develop stress management techniques** that work for you—such as exercise, quiet time, relaxing hobbies, or time with family and friends—to stay calm during stressful periods.