

## Preventing Winter-Related Slips, Trips and Falls on the Farm

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Many work-related injuries and fatalities are caused by slips, trips and falls, and winter weather can be a huge factor in creating situations that pose hazards to workers. Farmers may be working outdoors in adverse conditions which increase the risk of these types of injuries. An estimated 15-20% of all workers' compensation costs are related to injuries caused by slips, trips and falls, yet most of these injuries could be prevented by minimizing hazards.

The most effective way to prevent slips, trips and falls is by being aware of your surroundings. A good place to start is by conducting a safety survey in the workplace to identify and correct hazards that may cause injury. Inspect equipment, clear away clutter and check for slippery or uneven surfaces as well as tripping hazards – these factors may lead to injuries.

Potential hazards that you should always be aware of include wet and/or slippery surfaces that may become icy. Steep or unsafe stairways, areas with poor lighting and cluttered walkways and stairs may also pose a risk for injuries, especially in winter.

Some basic precautions that can help you avoid winter-related slips, trips and falls include taking your time and paying close attention to where you are going. Be careful even when temperatures are above freezing. Remember, mud can be just as slippery as ice and slush!

Some simple steps you can take to avoid injury are:

- be especially careful when carrying large or heavy objects that obstruct vision
- keep sand and salt handy and use regularly to help keep walkways clear of ice
- watch for slippery surfaces and walk slowly and carefully
- wear footwear with a good non-slip tread
- be careful when working with animals that might slip and fall and injure you
- clean ice off steps and platforms and keep them clean and dry to avoid ice buildup
- be extremely cautious when climbing on and off of tractors and machinery
- keep walkways and stairs free of clutter
- ensure adequate lighting for outdoor areas
- use railings on steps and walkways
- allow extra time for chores and don't rush or run

If you work with migrants or Hispanic laborers, keep in mind that they may not be familiar with winter weather, and be sure to talk with them about hazards and safe practices. NYCAMH offers free on-farm safety surveys and trainings that can help you be more aware of potential hazards and prevent slips, trips and falls on your farm. These sessions are also available in Spanish.

Being conscious of your surroundings and taking your time when working outdoors are the best ways to help prevent injuries related to slips, trips and falls. Be safe this winter!

If you would like more information about this topic, or wish to schedule a farm safety survey or on-farm safety training session, please contact me at 1-800-343-7527 or email me at [ameyerhoff@nycamh.com](mailto:ameyerhoff@nycamh.com). These surveys and trainings are offered at no cost and are available in English and Spanish. NYCAMH, a program of Bassett Healthcare Network, is enhancing agricultural and rural health by preventing and treating occupational injury and illness.