

# GET A GRIP ON SAFETY

ARE YOU READY FOR SPRING THAW?

SAFETY BULLETIN

ISSUE# 01-2019

Did you know this time of year brings an increased likelihood of worker injury from slips? Every spring many industries, including oil and gas, experience incidents with workers slipping on melting ice and snow.

## CHALLENGES:

- Many slips occur at transition zones like entering or leaving buildings and vehicles.
- Some slip-on-style boots have limited ankle support.
- Some footwear does not effectively grip on ice.
- Cleats are only effective if worn properly and consistently, and some cannot be worn inside buildings or when driving.
- Facilities may not be prepared for freeze/thaw conditions (e.g., not have enough ice melt on hand), particularly toward the end of winter/during spring thaw.



## WALK LIKE A PENGUIN

The penguin walk increases your stability on slippery surfaces.

To walk like a penguin:

- Widen your stance with your toes pointed outward.
- Take short, shuffle-like steps
- Walk flat-footed.
- Walk with your hands free, not in your pockets.

## KNOW HOW TO FALL

Even with dedicated preventative measures, slips that could lead to a fall may occur. A last resort mitigative strategy is to know *how* to fall to reduce the potential for injury.

A few things to consider:

- Protect your head with your hands.
- Try to fall on your side rather than your back.
- Try to roll with the fall to minimize blunt forces.



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## WHAT CAN SUPERVISORS DO?

- When planning the work schedule, consider the history of melting and pooling water and minimize work in areas that are heavily impacted in the spring.
- Ensure ice melt is readily available at work sites and stored in vehicles.
- Have a snow removal plan and ensure timely snow removal.
- Have a grip program (see Additional Resources below) that includes the allocation of appropriate boots for your workers.
- Use traction aids, including cleats or boots with built-in traction, such as carbide pins, which do not generate sparks.
- Discuss slip hazards with workers at meetings.
- Empower your workers to take the time needed to walk carefully around the work site.

## WHAT CAN WORKERS DO?

- Keep your mind and eyes on the task of walking when slippery surfaces may be present, especially in transition zones.
- Be mindful of slipping hazards later in the evening when water begins to re-freeze. Identify these trouble spots and report them to your supervisor.
- Walk like a penguin (flat-footed shuffling) when on slippery surfaces and keep your hands free.
- Apply ice melt to slippery surfaces.
- Use traction aids and take time to move safely around the work site and your vehicle.
- If you do slip and fall, protect your head and try to fall on your side rather than your back.

## PRESENT LIKE A PRO

### Before you begin:

Understand the topic and how it applies to you and your team.

Research your own company's experience and provide examples that pertain to your work areas.

If you're not able to answer a question, find the information and make sure you follow up.

Consider the audience. Are they familiar with the topic and the terminology?

### Involve the group:

Discuss and share stories of slip injuries on your work sites.

Identify any areas or situations on your work sites where slipping is more likely.

Demonstrate how to walk like a penguin and how to fall.

Challenge the group to find other ways to prevent slips.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Contact [Energy Safety Canada](#) to sign-up for the Get a Grip Program.

