

Slips on ice hurt!



Injuries from slips on ice are common in many workplaces and are part of a bigger grouping called “slips and trips”. In 2018, 1,387 New Brunswickers missed time from work due to a slip or trip, representing 23% of all the claims in New Brunswick – an alarming trend.

The costs for these injuries are borne by New Brunswick employers. In 2018, the total claim cost was \$21.8 million – a staggering number for a province our size.

\$21.8 M



WorkSafeNB estimates that winter conditions are a major factor in one-third of all slips and trips injuries. Fast-changing weather patterns could be a factor, as it has become common to see temperatures rise from well below zero to reach to single or even double-digits by the afternoon. This freeze-thaw cycle often creates hazards around parking lots, sidewalks, entrances, driveways, loading docks, and school bus parking lanes, to name a few.

We try to avoid slips and trips by putting salt and sand around entrances and parking lots, wearing winter boots, walking slowly, etc. These solutions help but as the numbers show, it's not enough. What else can be done?



1,387 = 23%

New Brunswickers missed time from work in 2018

of all injury claims in the Province.



Winter footwear – not good for winters?

A recent study from the University of Toronto shows most winter boots are simply not good on icy surfaces. The study looked at hundreds of winter boot models and rated them for dry ice and slippery slopes. The results, and boot ratings, can be found at: www.ratemytreads.com

Cleats work!

One thing is clear, nothing beats cleats for walking on dry ice or slippery slopes. A Quebec home care service provider gave cleats to its 200 employees during the winter months. They piloted various types before choosing a model. Their initial investment was \$6,960 at \$35 per pair...and it really paid off! They went from 30 slips and trips claims between 2006 to 2009, to just two claims between 2010 and 2013...a reduction of 94%! This is one of the reasons cleats get a three-snowflake (***) rating.

Parking lots

Slips and trips are common in parking lots. Many of us have a colleague, friend or family member who have experienced a bad fall in a parking lot due to winter conditions. The typical family morning rush often distracts us. That one day that you are running late, rushing and simply not paying attention, you take the first step out of the car and voila! Statistics show that getting in and out of vehicles causes injuries. Getting out of a car with your hands full, wearing improper footwear or parking on an icy spot are examples of unsafe behaviours. When operating heavy machinery, maintain three points of contact when climbing in or out of the cabin. Jumping out of the cabin or bed is an example of unsafe behaviour.



Top tips for winter months



Use cleats on snow and ice but remove before entering buildings.



Recognize that a puddle of water in a low point of a parking lot will become icy during the winter months.



Buy a good pair of winter boots using the latest research (www.ratemytreads.com).



Walk at a slower pace and take shorter strides.



Walk flat foot style by pushing off your heel.



Keep soles as clear of snow as possible. Wipe boots dry before exiting buildings to prevent wet soles from freezing.



Watch for freeze-thaw cycles. Ice is most slippery at 1°C.



If possible, postpone activities, change the location or use a less slippery route.