

5 Ways to Winterize Your Workplace

Workplace Housekeeping can become routine to the point of going unnoticed. So a good safety plan should build in regular reviews of housekeeping procedures during the course of the year. The arrival of cold weather is an appropriate time for one of such reviews. It's also a good time to see what, if anything, needs to change to suit the colder weather.

Check Your Housekeeping Checklist

Before getting into the seasonal concerns, you need to make sure that all aspects of your basic housekeeping plan are being implemented, for example:

- Is the place tidy?
- Are things stored in their proper places, kept clean and maintained in good order?
- Have slip, trip and fall hazards been eliminated?
- Are spills cleaned up and fire hazards addressed?

Once you've covered the basics, here are five ways you can address cold weather concerns.

1. Look Down

Ice and snow cause thousands of slip, trip and fall injuries each winter. Therefore, keep buckets of salt or ice melter handy and ensure that someone is responsible for keeping walkways, paths and building entrances clear. Put down mats inside the doors of buildings to absorb melted snow and provide traction.

2. Look Up

Are there sloping roofs, overhangs or pipes over any pedestrian routes? Make sure to keep them snow-free and break off icicles.

3. Look Around

If your workplace has outdoor storage or work areas, make sure they all remain accessible, even when the snow gets deep. Mark road hazards, such as open manholes, pits or raised pavement castings with stakes and fluorescent tape so that drivers and pedestrians can steer clear. Ensure fire and emergency equipment aren't buried.

4. Look in the Shed

If your workplace has snow-clearing equipment or other gear needed for winter, inspect them. Make sure snow shovels and other tools are in good shape.

5. Designate Space

If your parking lots or walkways are plowed or blown clear, think about where you're going to put all that snow. Make sure to designate a corner of your workplace to pile up winter's leavings.



Conclusion

The basic rule is keep snow and ice out of your building and off your walkways. With that simple housekeeping idea in mind, you can prevent many of the hazards of winter from becoming injuries. Remember, winter hazards don't go until winter is over. Remind your workers to keep their eyes open and report any hazard immediately. At the least, they may save someone's dignity. At the most, they may save someone's life.

Ted Morrison - www.safetyxchange.org