

Even the Military Wants to Prevent Falls

As many of you know, Stephan and I have been working on various Army bases in the nation this past quarter. From previous years, especially in snow regions such as, Wisconsin, the Installation Safety Offices (ISO) have received reports of more than a dozen slip-and-fall accidents in the winter. Their strategies are now being posted on every base to avoid injury and long recovery. Here's a summary of the notices they are posting in every building on base:

Notice to all Building Occupants:

It is important to be continually aware of the dangers walking safely on ice and slippery surfaces. Pedestrian foot traffic to and from parking lots and between buildings during the winter requires special attention and precautions. No matter how well the snow and ice is removed from streets, parking lots, and sidewalks, military personnel and civilian staff will invariably encounter some dangerous surfaces when traversing outdoors in the winter.

We ask that you use these strategies:

- Plan ahead and give yourself sufficient time to reach your destination.
- Wear shoes or boots with a rubber and neoprene composite sole that provides traction on snow and ice, avoiding footwear with plastic and leather soles.
- Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles. Transfer weight slowly and use the vehicle for support.
- Always, walk in designated walkways, taking shortcuts over snow piles can be hazardous.
- Look ahead when you walk. Sidewalks completely covered with ice may require travel along its grassy edge for traction.

Pedestrians facing no choice but to walk on ice, might want to consider the following safety recommendations:

- Take short steps or shuffle for stability.
- Bend slightly and walk flat-footed with the center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible.
- If you fall, fall with sequential contacts at your thigh, hip and shoulder to avoid using your arms and to protect against breaks.
- Bend your back and head forward so you won't slam your head on the pavement as your feet shoot out from under you.
- Clearing entry walks is the responsibility of the building occupants. Don't forget to clear by those seldom-used doors in case an emergency exit is necessary.

We're certain these can help you too in your winter tasks and holiday errands. Regardless of the industry or profession you work in, isn't it a great achievement that fall 'awareness & prevention' is now one of the top priorities?