



COMMON FINDS: SNOW REMOVAL OPERATIONS

BACKGROUND:

Snow removal operations expose both municipalities and school districts to similar risks. Whether it's pooling snow and water, using snowblowers, or lifting buckets of salt, these hazards and actions can cause severe injuries. Although OSHA does not have regulations specifically for winter operations, the hazards associated with those operations fall under OSHA's purview.



OBSERVATIONS:

The photos shown here are just some of the hazards that employees face. From snow removal on elevated surfaces to maintaining a dry, non-slip walking area, employees are at higher risk of injury during winter operations due to a range of factors.



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RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Consider implementing a policy that covers:
 - a. Relevant hazards associated with winter operations, in accordance with OSHA 29 CFR 1910.132
 - b. Preventing staff sprain and strain injuries
 - c. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements (proper shoes and clothing to wear)
2. Consider inspecting and documenting maintenance logs for all tools and vehicles used in snow removal operations. If removing snow from elevated areas, consider the OSHA Fall Protection standards (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.28 and 1910.140).
3. Consider regularly inspecting walking and working surfaces for potential pooling of snow and ice.

1910.22(a)(3)

Walking-working surfaces are maintained free of hazards such as sharp or protruding objects, loose boards, corrosion, leaks, spills, snow, and ice.

1910.23(b)(9)

Ladders are inspected before initial use at the start of each work shift and more frequently as needed to identify any visible defects that could cause employee injury.

1910.23(b)(10)

Any ladder with structural or other defects is immediately tagged “Dangerous: Do Not Use” or with similar language in accordance with § 1910.145 and removed from service until repaired in accordance with § 1910.22(d), or replaced.

1910.23(c)(9)

Portable ladders used on slippery surfaces are secured and stabilized.

1910.140(c)

Personal fall protection systems: General requirements. The employer must ensure that personal fall protection systems meet the following requirements. Additional requirements for personal fall arrest systems and positioning systems are contained in paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section, respectively.

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