

# Snow and Ice Removal Guidelines for Schools

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Education, Property & Casualty



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Slips on snow and ice are a leading cause of workers' compensation injuries in schools. They are also a leading cause of liability injuries. M3 specializes in developing safety programs and risk management strategies for schools, even when it comes to seasonal hazards. Here are some ways to keep staff, students, and community members safe this winter.

## Snow/Ice Removal Controls

Does your school district have an action plan that covers snow and ice removal for building entrances, sidewalks, and parking lots? This is the first step to ensure main entrances where students and staff enter the building are cleared and safe. Here are additional tips as your district gets ready for winter:

- Prepare all snow/ice equipment and distribute to each of the designated schools prior to the snow/ice season
- Remember to use a local radio and TV station for weather reports and school closing information
- Post school closing information on your school district's website
- Create specific time guidelines to address when snow/ice should be removed, starting with the main entrances
- Establish a snow storage plan for each school facility
- Obtain written agreements and certificates of insurance from subcontracts who are utilized for snow/ice removal
- Mark hydrants and other fixtures that need to be protected during the winter season
- Require building and grounds personnel to wear proper personal protective equipment when operating snow removal machinery
- Recommend that school employees wear slip resistant shoes while walking into the building and bring a change of dress shoes

## Procedures

Keep your students and staff safe this winter by establishing clear procedures to improve your district's snow and ice removal efficiency. The quicker your district can respond to complaints, the less likely the hazard will result in a workers' compensation or liability claim. Complaints of indoor hazards should be taken as seriously as outdoor hazards. Reduce the amount of slippery water coming into the building by periodically cleaning and replacing entrance door rugs and mats.

We recommend implementing a daily log into your snow and ice removal procedure that tracks conditions and treatments of entrances, sidewalks, and parking areas. When you meet with your buildings and grounds staff, remember to review removal procedures and safety controls. This is also a great opportunity to remind staff to leverage "spot salting" procedures for trouble areas such as stop signs, curves, entrances, etc.

## Snow Piles

If your snow and ice removal crew takes the time to level off snow piles, this will reduce the “attractive nuisance” exposure. Children see snow piles as play areas, however, this can be very dangerous on school grounds. We recommend leveling off snow piles near play areas and instructing your playground supervisors to keep children off of large snow piles.

### Key Takeaways

During snow and ice conditions, a designated school employee should monitor all entrances for snow and ice accumulation throughout the day. Maintaining clean walkways around your school district is critical to reduce the exposure to slip and fall accidents for students, employees, and the general public. The controls highlighted in this article are essential steps to reducing workers’ compensation and liability injuries. For further guidance on preparing your district for winter, reach out to [your risk manager](#).



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