

SAFETY NOTICE

COLD WEATHER SAFETY

Inclement weather has a serious impact on claims. Snow, ice and cold weather can increase slips and falls, broken pipes and roof damage, all of which can be costly. Every year we experience very preventable losses. Please review the following recommendations and ensure you are doing everything possible to reduce the risks of weather-related claims:

EXTERIOR

- Have a snow removal plan in place. Restrict access to designated entrances to ensure your facilities staff has ample time to properly clear these areas before school opens. You may be able to accomplish this using the software in your key card/fob access control systems.
- Pre-treat parking lots and sidewalks when snow or ice accumulation is expected. Pre-treating hinders the ability of ice and snow to bond to the surface allowing additional time to mobilize facilities staff. It also makes clearing accumulated snow and ice easier. Brine solutions work very well for pre-treating and are available commercially or from your county road department.
- Ensure adequate ice melt products to assist in melting ice and snow and consider sand for surface applications to provide a higher slip resistance. Note that ice melt products require heat in the form of sunlight or friction to be effective, so early morning applications may not be fully effective when school opens.
- When plowing parking lots, make sure an adequate number of cut through paths are made for people walking to the building to deter people from climbing mounded snow or attempting to jump over the piles.
- Inspect parking areas in advance of a storm to make sure there are no potholes, large cracks or other deficiencies that could get hidden by snow and cause an injury.
- Check to make sure exterior lighting is working properly and that critical walking paths are properly illuminated for night time and early morning hours.
- Make sure that downspouts from gutters are not draining across sidewalks and walkways.
- Winterize outdoor piping, hose bibs, window air conditioners and other equipment susceptible to freezing.
- Inspect roofs for damage before the snow. Check flashing around vents since these areas are prone to leaks during slow thaws of ice and snow.
- Ensure roof drains are clear and be aware of ice damming.



*Creating Safer, Healthier
School Environments*

ACCASBO • BCIP • GCSSD • SEJIF
www.spelljif.com • (856) 446-9128



- Inspect exterior HVAC dampers to ensure they are not blocked or frozen open which can lead to freezing pipes and coils.
- Ensure facilities staff know the location of main water shutoff valves in the event of a pipe leak. This will minimize water damage to the facility.
- Evaluate playground fall zones during freezing weather before allowing children to play on equipment. Most fall zone materials are rated as loose-fill material. When mulch or sand starts to freeze, it will lose part of its protection factor.
- In icy conditions, consider providing facilities staff with strap-on cleats or Yak Trax for better grip protection when working outside. However, remind them it is critical they be removed before coming inside as they can be very slippery on a regular floor.
- Consider Ice-Alert or similar signage at strategic locations that changes color as a visual warning to pedestrians.



INTERIOR

- Place extended non-slip, water-absorbent mats at the designated entrances. These mats should extend at least 12-15 feet into the school to allow adequate distance for the bottom of shoes to be sufficiently dried off.
- Consider stationing a custodian with a mop and bucket at key entrances during the morning rush. While manpower may be short, this should be considered a critical assignment during inclement weather.
- Consider the use of plastic umbrella bags on a stand at the entrances that allow people to place the umbrella in a bag before tracking water onto the hallway floors, creating a serious slip hazard.
- Remember to use wet floor signs in critical areas to remind people to be cautious.
- Make safety announcements and send out email reminders in advance of an expected bad weather event to remind people of any district-specific safety issues and to exercise caution.
- Ensure adequate heat is maintained in all areas of the building, especially during extended school closings. Remember that sufficient ambient heat is necessary to prevent pipes in ceilings, plenums and pipe chases from freezing as these areas are typically unheated.
- Remind staff to close any windows they may open during the day when the heating system is creating excessively warm conditions in an office or classroom.



*Creating Safer, Healthier
School Environments*

ACCASBO • BCIP • GCSSD • SEJIF
www.spelljif.com • (856) 446-9128



- Establish strict rules for the use of portable space heaters. Fuel-fired portable heaters are prohibited in schools, however electrical space heaters are at the discretion of the local Fire Official. At a minimum the heater must:
 - Be UL listed
 - Have a guard over the heating element
 - Be provided with tip-over protection
 - Have an automatic thermostat
 - Be maintained in good condition
 - Be must be plugged directly into an outlet (no extension cords)
 - Maintain at least 36-inch clearance to combustible materials
 - Never be left on overnight or for extended periods of time

PERSONAL CHOICES

- Remind employees to wear appropriate non-slip footwear during bad weather.
- Do not carry too much in your hands or obstruct your vision while walking across icy surfaces.
- Do not allow yourself to be distracted by cell phone use, conversations or actions of others.
- Slide feet across slippery surfaces or take smaller steps to maintain contact with the surface.
- Stay on cleared, designated walking paths even if it means walking a little farther. Be careful when stepping off curbs.
- If you must use steps, make sure you have a free hand to grasp the handrail.
- Wipe your feet thoroughly upon entering the building to clear off water, mud, ice melt and sand.

**Remember, it is less time-consuming
to prevent a claim than to
deal with it!**



*Creating Safer, Healthier
School Environments*

ACCASBO • BCIP • GCSSD • SEJIF
www.spelljif.com • (856) 446-9128

