



# Snow Shoveling Safety

Toolbox Talks are intended to facilitate health and safety discussions. Find more Toolbox Talks on the [Occupational Safety web page](#).

## General Information

Snow shoveling is not safe for everyone. It may be especially dangerous for people, who do not regularly exercise, as their bodies, may not be prepared for the level of activity.



## Snow Shoveling Safety Tips

- Wear proper clothing when working outside for extended periods.
  - Warm and sturdy footwear with slip-resistant soles or add on traction with slip-on ice cleats.
  - Wear clothing in layers with an outer water repellent shell.
  - Head coverings
  - Mittens or gloves
  - Sunglasses may be necessary to protect the eyes from sun glare.
- Warm up your muscles before shoveling by stretching (e.g., arms, legs, and back).
- Bend at the knees, keep the back upright, and lift with your legs, not your back!
- Use a shovel that is comfortable for your height and strength.
- When possible, push the snow rather than lift it, to reduce strain on the body.
- Shovel small amounts of snow at a time.
- Switch off between snow shoveling right-handed and left-handed, so that you're working different muscles.
- Periodically change your grip on the hand holding bar (palm under vs. palm over).
- Do not throw snow over your shoulder or to the side, as this requires a twisting motion that stresses the back.
- Once the walkway is clear, consider putting down ice melt or sand.
- Take frequent breaks and drink plenty of water to avoid overexertion.
- If possible, clear snow early and often, to avoid having to remove heavy snow.
- If at any time you experience pain or chest discomfort, stop what you are doing immediately and seek medical attention.
- Stretch (e.g., arms, legs, and back) when finished.

Discussion Date:

Supervisor:

Participants:

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