



TOIRMA Update

By Jim Donelan

TOIRMA Executive Director

Be Safe on Ice

AS OF THE WRITING OF THIS ARTICLE in early November, Illinois has been fortunate to have had no significant snow events so far this fall. If only this could continue through the winter months. However, as Illinoisans we all know that snow will eventually rear its head along with the cold months ahead.

Illinois is a big state, especially north to south. The northern portion of the state tends to receive its first significant snowfall earlier in the year than the southern parts. As is with weather, even as predictable as it is today, it's still unpredictable and Mother Nature tends to do as she wishes. Snow or not, the unfortunate part of living in Illinois is that the temperature drops below freezing and surfaces become more slippery and ice covered.

During a recent TOIRMA claims review, it was clear that a significant portion of workers' compensation claims were relating to injuries sustained during slips, trips or falls. A further review shines the spotlight on slips and falls on ice.

Walk Like a Penguin



TOIRMA has a *Risk Reminder* focusing on this very topic "Be Safe on Ice."

It is important for everyone to be constantly aware of these dangers and to learn to walk safely on ice and slippery surfaces.

Keep these important safety tips in mind:

- In cold temperatures, approach with caution and assume that all wet, dark areas on pavements are slippery and icy.
- During bad weather, avoid boots or shoes with smooth soles and heels. Instead, wear shoes or boots that provide traction on snow and ice; boots made of non-slip rubber or neoprene with grooved soles are best.
- Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles; use the vehicle for support.

- Walk in designated walkways as much as possible. Taking shortcuts over snow piles and other frozen areas can be hazardous. Look ahead when you walk; a snow or ice-covered sidewalk or driveway, especially if on a hill, may require travel along its grassy edge for traction.
- Point your feet out slightly like a penguin! Spreading your feet out slightly while walking on ice increases your center of gravity.
- Bend slightly and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible.
- Extend your arms out to your sides to maintain balance.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets! Hands in your pockets while walking decreases your center of gravity and balance. You can help break your fall with your hands free if you do start to slip.
- Watch where you are stepping and GO SLOWLY!
- Take short steps or shuffled for stability.
- Wear a heavy, bulky coat that will cushion you if you should fall.
- Try to avoid landing on your knees, wrists, or spine. Try to fall on a fleshy part of your body, such as your side.
- Try to relax your muscles if you fall. You'll injure yourself less if you are relaxed.

By slowing down, taking precautions, hopefully we will be able to enjoy a safer and injury free winter season.

Happy Holidays and thank you for your attention to these matters.

As always, if you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me toll-free at (888) 562-7861 or by email at jdonelan@toirma.org.

Think Safe ... Drive Safe ... Work Safe