



TOIRMA Update

By Jim Donelan

TOIRMA Executive Director

Ice and Snow – Take it Slow

NOVEMBER IS HERE and with this month comes many activities. The fall season is well underway and Halloween, which seems like it starts in September, has just ended. Our sister association, the Township Officials of Illinois (TOI), is preparing for its Annual Educational Conference in Springfield from November 10-12. I hope to see you at the conference, for it's a great event focusing on educating township officials. Then there's Thanksgiving, my favorite holiday, and how can I leave out Black Friday. With the holiday season soon upon us, unfortunately so too is the forthcoming winter weather. By slowing down and taking precautions, you will be able to enjoy a safer and injury free winter season.

The TOIRMA Program historically experiences a rise in weather related claims during the winter. Whether its walking into your township buildings from your vehicle, performing road district duties in the field, or climbing into or from equipment, slips and falls occur more during this period. Remember, "Ice and Snow, Take it Slow." This will aid in keeping you and your employees safer and, hopefully, injury free. TOIRMA has a new *Risk Reminder* "Be Safe on Ice" that outlines the following safety tips.



- Assume that all wet, dark areas on pavements are slippery and icy.
- 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 (see the "Three-Point Contact Rule" on next page).
- 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.

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- 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.

Our Loss Control Team preaches the importance of the "Three-Point Contact Rule" when mounting and dismounting equipment, known as the "safety triangle." By maintaining three points of contact while getting on and off vehicles and equipment you are helping the prevention of avoidable injuries. According to TOIRMA's *Risk Reminder* on "Mounting & Dismounting Equipment" by practicing the following, you will help prevent injuries.

- Maintain three-point contact with steps and hand holds. This helps maintain a person's center of gravity and ensures that they are less likely to lose their balance.
- Face the vehicle or equipment when dismounting and mounting, and keep either both hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand in contact with the vehicle or equipment.
- Never jump on or off the vehicle or equipment.



- Never attempt to mount or dismount moving vehicles or equipment.

To aid township officials in this effort, TOIRMA has a "Three-Point Contact" sticker available for use. It is designed to be placed on the rise of the steps of vehicles and equipment, serving as a visual reminder when mounting and dismounting. To obtain stickers please contact Danielle Smith at (217) 444-1204 or dsmith@ccmsi.com, and we will happily mail them to you.

The "Mounting and Dismounting" and "Be Safe on Ice" *Risk Reminders* referenced above are available on our website, toirma.org on the "Toolbox" page. We recommend printing off these *Risk Reminders* and displaying them in employee work areas and bulletin boards.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. Let's hope by slowing down and taking precautions we will all enjoy a safe and injury free winter season.

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.

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