Winter safety moment

29 CFR 1910.22, 1926.451, 1926.154, 1926.601, 1926.56, 1926.21

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

What is the one winter hazard on this job that worries you most this week?

Why it matters

Winter changes the job overnight. Walkways ice over, days get shorter, roads get slick and heaters move into closed spaces. None of these hazards are new, but they pile up at the same time and change from one morning to the next. A few minutes of planning at the start of each shift keeps small surprises from turning into injuries.

Key points

1. **Treat every surface as slippery**
   Ice hides in shaded spots and on steel, ramps, stairs and truck steps. Walk slowly with short steps, keep your hands out of your pockets and use the handrail. In general industry, employers must keep walking-working surfaces free of hazards such as snow and ice (29 CFR 1910.22(a)(3)). Report icy spots so they get salted or sanded before someone falls.
   29 CFR 1910.22(a)(3)

2. **Clear scaffolds, stairs and ladders first**
   Do not work on a scaffold covered with snow, ice or other slippery material, except to clear it off (29 CFR 1926.451(f)(8)). Clear stairs, platforms and ladder rungs before anyone climbs. Knock the snow off your boots first and keep a firm grip.
   29 CFR 1926.451(f)(8)

3. **Dress for the cold and watch each other**
   Wear loose layers, keep spare dry socks and gloves, and cover your head, ears and hands. Learn the early signs of hypothermia, like shivering, clumsy hands and confusion, and of frostbite, like numb, pale or waxy skin. Take warm-up breaks, eat and drink something warm, and check on your buddy at each break.

4. **Heat work areas safely**
   Fuel-burning heaters and generators give off carbon monoxide, a gas you cannot see or smell. When temporary heaters are used, fresh air must be supplied in sufficient quantities to maintain workers' health and safety (29 CFR 1926.154(a)(1)). Keep heaters level and away from tarps and anything that burns, and never run a generator indoors.
   29 CFR 1926.154(a)(1)

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5 Drive for the conditions

Slow down, leave more room to stop, and clear snow and ice from every window, light and mirror before you move. On jobsites closed to public traffic, vehicles that work where windshields fog or frost must have working defogging or defrosting devices (29 CFR 1926.601(b)(5)). Keep a scraper, blanket, flashlight and charged phone in the truck. If you get stranded, stay with the vehicle, keep the tailpipe clear of snow and run the engine only in short bursts for heat.

29 CFR 1926.601(b)(5)

6 Plan for short days and storms

It gets dark early, so plan the riskiest tasks for daylight and set up lights before you need them. Construction work areas must be lit to at least OSHA's minimum levels while work is in progress (29 CFR 1926.56(a)). Check the forecast each morning, and agree on who calls a stop when a storm rolls in.

29 CFR 1926.56(a)

Scenario

Picture this: the first hard freeze hit overnight. Someone has set a propane heater inside a half-closed stairwell to thaw things out, and the steps are glazed with ice. A laborer is heading up with a bucket in each hand. What would you fix first, before anyone else goes up?

Crew discussion

1. Where does ice build up first on this site, and who handles salt and sand?
2. Which heaters are we running, and how do those areas get fresh air?
3. What is in your truck's winter kit right now?
4. What will we do differently on the darkest, coldest mornings?

Bottom line

Winter hazards change overnight, so check your footing, your gear, your heaters and your drive at the start of every shift.

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Winter safety / Seguridad en invierno

Date / Fecha _____

Trainer / Instructor _____

Location / Lugar _____

Company / Empresa _____

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