

Tips for avoiding slips, trips and falls on icy snow covered sidewalks

This winter's icy conditions, along with freezing and thawing cycles, pose a hazard to pedestrians trying to get around on slippery sidewalks.

Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) is reminding pedestrians to take care, and offers some tips to prevent falls on snow or ice.

Falls from navigating ice and snow-covered pathways can result in fractures, dislocations and even concussions.

“Each winter, slip-and-fall accidents cause serious injuries,” IBC Vice-President, Ontario, Ralph Palumbo said. “Many slips and falls happen in places people think are safe, such as outside their front door or on the driveway getting into a car. It's important to always use extreme caution when travelling on foot at this time of year.”

Homeowners and business owners also have a role to play. Municipalities have different rules about clearing snow and ice from sidewalks and private property. But in addition to those rules, homeowners and business owners could be held liable if an injury occurred on or in front of their property. It is everyone's responsibility to keep sidewalks, driveways and walkways as clear as possible.

Here are a few safety tips for pedestrians, homeowners and business owners.

? Wear sturdy footwear, with a good grip ? you can always change into other shoes when you reach your destination.

? Walk slowly and take short, deliberate steps. Allow yourself extra time to get from A to B, so you don't need to make a last-minute dash.

? Avoid walking with your hands in your pockets. Keeping your hands free helps with balance.

? Avoid areas with poor lighting. Be aware that black ice can look like wet pavement.

? Use handrails on stairs, so you can catch yourself if you slip.

? Use special care when entering or exiting vehicles.

? Keep walkways clear of debris, water, ice and other slippery materials whenever possible.

??Push the snow rather than lift it when shovelling. If you must throw snow, take only as much as you can easily lift, and bend with your knees not your back.

? Try to shovel your driveway and sidewalk right away after a snowfall, before it gets packed down. Lighter loads are easier on your back and arms.

? Salt or place sand on your front steps, driveway, and sidewalk.