



Snow Removal Plan

Why Winter-Weather Preparedness Should Be a Priority

Have you had your first snow day yet? Probably so, as Colorado continues to experience record-setting snowfall in 2019. While heaps of snow can mean profits for ski resorts, not having the right Snow Removal Plan in place can lead to costly insurance claims for Members.

Slip & Fall Claims

Slip and fall claims are the most common snow and ice claims. In the event of a slip and fall claim, your School Entity Liability Policy is activated, defense costs are provided, and payment of a claim becomes dependent on the details surrounding the event. As an example, a high school winter program attendee was injured when she slipped and fell on sidewalk ice near a school entrance. The attendee sued the School District, alleging the School's negligence in snow and ice removal or mitigation created a dangerous condition and caused her fall. The School District was found liable and the total cost of the claim exceeded \$99,000.

For snow-related slip and fall claims, Members cannot automatically assume protection under the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act (CGIA) as a dangerous condition caused by snow and ice accumulation is a waiver of immunity when the public entity had notice of such condition and a reasonable time to act. Effective Snow Removal Plan implementation can help mitigate risk of CGIA waivers and limit large claim payouts.

Snow Removal Plan Guidelines

When developing a Snow Removal Plan, focus on getting students, employees, parents, and visitors safely to and from the building. An effective plan must include a list of primary routes, adequate resource allocation, and management support. At a minimum, this list should include:

- entrances nearest to parking lots or loading zones
- fire exits
- fire hydrants
- evacuation rally points



Facilities should identify and clear priority areas, and close uncleared routes such as low-traffic paths or poor drainage areas, where melted snow could freeze and cause slippery conditions. When winter storms are forecasted, inform employees and parents which areas will not be cleared. Barricade or mark these areas as closed. Advise food Service workers and other early-reporting employees of alternate entries or parking areas to use on winter storm days.

The plan should also prioritize venerable roof areas where the weight of snow could cause collapse, such as those on modular buildings. Assign specific people to ensure that priority areas will be cleared in a timely manner. It is also important to identify equipment and facilities that may cause damage to or be damaged by snow removal equipment. Although each site is unique, these typically include curbs, shrubs, manholes, valve covers (for underground utilities), speed bumps, and artificial turf.

Sample Snow Removal Plan

The goal of the plan is to provide safe walkways for students, staff, and neighbors, eliminate injuries and to provide for the efficient entry and departure of the school building when snow and/or ice is present.

Engineer/Supervisor Responsibilities:

- Monitor pending weather forecast and conditions of sidewalks and entrances
- Keep all snow removal equipment operational and ready to run
- Maintain adequate inventory of gasoline, salt, sand, shovels, etc.
- Determine scope of snow removal requirements
- Train custodial employees in the safe operation of power equipment
- Notify custodial employees of the need for snow removal
- Supervise snow removal operations

Custodial Employees Responsibilities:

- Monitor the conditions of their sidewalks and entrances
- Arrive for work prepared to protect themselves from the dangers of winter. Wear

hat, gloves, boots, heavy coat, scarf, facemask, etc.

- Arrive at work at the time designated by the Engineer/Supervisor
- Be familiar with the safe operation of all mechanical snow equipment
- ***Document, document, document*** snow removal operations including when, where and what you did and any product you applied from designated areas
- Mop up all standing water in school building after entrance of students

Scope of Work:

- Clear all sidewalks, entrances, walkways, driveways, and parking lots of snow, slush, and ice
- Spread salt as required
- All walkways, sidewalks, crosswalks, etc. shall be cleared to the full width
- All exterior doors must be operational and exits unimpeded
- All crosswalks are to be cleared out to the center of the street
- All school bus drop-off zones are to be cleared
- All storm drainage/sewer openings are to be cleared to allow for run-off of melting snow
- All fire hydrants are to be cleared of snow accumulations
- All downspouts are to be cleared of ice accumulations

Don't forget, though storm-day plan implementation is important, it is just as important to continue to follow your Snow Removal Plan in the following days as snow and ice melts and refreezes.

Implementation of a Snow Removal Plan like this one can promote a safer environment and reduce the risk of high-cost claims.



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