

CI PROFILE

COMMERCIAL INSURANCE

DID YOU KNOW?

Touching extremely cold metal surfaces—like the outside of a heavy machine—can cause instant frost damage to your skin. To prevent this, it's important to wear proper protection in the form of insulated gloves.



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Best Practices for Maintaining and Using Heavy Equipment in the Cold

Learn how to ensure your heavy machinery survives the winter with these best practices.

Creating an Effective Workplace Housekeeping Program

An effective workplace housekeeping program can help reduce workplace hazards. Read on to learn what strong programs should include.

Best Practices for Maintaining and Using Heavy Equipment in the Cold

Winter climates can be brutal on heavy machinery and equipment—causing breakdowns, and, subsequently, lost time. To avoid costly lapses in equipment function, and to ensure the safe operation of your machines, keep in mind the following best practices:

- Maintain fuel, air and hydraulic filters to ensure quick startup and to avoid power loss during use. In addition, regular oil changes will keep machines lubricated and can help prevent the oil condensation that typically occurs in cold weather.
- Be careful when dealing with batteries in the winter, as attempting to recharge a frozen battery can cause an explosion. In addition, improper jumper cable hookups can cause extensive electrical damage to the machine.
- Before you begin using your machines in the cold weather, it's important to give them ample time to warm up. This will help you avoid putting stress on hoses and wires that have become brittle from the cold.
- Ensure that all machines have working heat inside the cab to protect drivers from the cold. In addition, drivers should be aware of any bodies of water or other obstructions nearby. Drivers should keep the windows of their machines ice- and fog-free to help avoid dangerous collisions.

Above all, it's important to be realistic about the amount of work that can be completed in cold temperatures. Often, frozen ground can complicate digging and put an unnecessary strain on machines.

Always properly assess the conditions before beginning work. Keeping in mind these tips can help ensure the smooth operation of your equipment and the safety of on-site workers.

Provided by:

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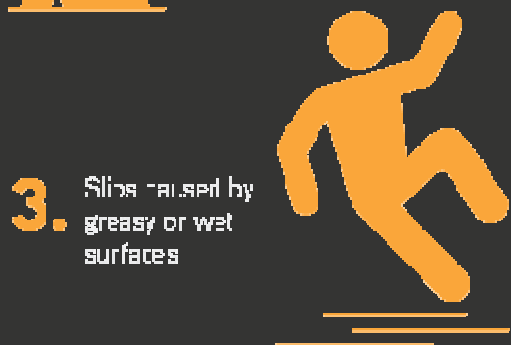


Four major dangers of poor workplace housekeeping:

1. Trips caused by loose objects on floors, stairs, etc



2. Blunt force trauma caused by falling objects



3. Slips caused by greasy or wet surfaces



4. Cuts or punctures caused by protruding nails, wire or steel strapping

Source: The Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America

Creating an Effective Workplace Housekeeping Program

Workplace housekeeping—the act of maintaining clean and organized workspaces—may seem like a chore, but it can go a long way in preventing injury. In fact, good workplace housekeeping practices can reduce the following:

- Clutter, and, subsequently, injuries caused by slips and trips
- Potential fire hazards
- Worker exposure to hazardous dust and vapours

In general, strong housekeeping programs help manage the storage and movement of materials. To accomplish this, housekeeping programs account for shift clean-up, waste disposal, the removal of unused materials and daily inspections. Because ongoing upkeep involves a coordinated effort across your organization, proper employee training is a must.

The following are other things workplace housekeeping programs should take into account:

- **Dust and dirt removal.** Vacuuming is the most effective way to remove dust and dirt. Dampening the surface prior to removal can help reduce the spread of potentially hazardous airborne dust.
- **Employee facilities.** Washrooms need to be clean and well stocked with proper supplies. Smoking, eating and drinking in the work area should be avoided, especially in areas where hazardous materials are present. When possible, provide locks for the storage of personal belongings.
- **Spill control.** Attempt to prevent spills wherever possible. Use drip pans and guards on applicable equipment. Regular cleaning and maintenance can also help prevent oil and other leaks.
- **Tools and equipment storage.** Tools should have their own clearly marked storage areas. This will encourage employees to put items back when they are done with them.
- **Light fixtures.** Maintaining adequate levels of light can reduce the risk of trips and slips while also making the cleaning process easier.
- **Aisles and stairways.** Aisles and stairways need to be wide enough to accommodate the free movement of multiple people. Avoid clutter as much as possible in these areas.

Taking these things into account will help you create a strong workplace housekeeping program and improve overall workplace safety.