

Take Care When Removing Snow From Construction Sites & Workplaces

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

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The recent extreme weather prompted OSHA to send out a reminder to workers, employers and the general public of the potential dangers associated with snow and ice removal from [construction sites](#), commercial parking lots and other workplaces.

"Cleaning up after a storm encompasses a variety of tasks, each of which can carry risks if performed incorrectly or without proper safeguards," said OSHA regional administrator Cindy Coe in a press release. "We want people to know what those risks are and what steps they can take to protect themselves against these hazards."

According to the EEOC, workers and employers should be aware of the following hazards common to cleanup work after storms:

- Electrical shock from using ungrounded electrical equipment or from downed power lines
- Falls from heights when clearing ice jams in gutters, removing snow from roofs, or working on ladders or lifts
- Being struck by tree branches or parts of structures that collapse due to the weight of ice or snow
- Carbon monoxide poisoning when gas-powered generators or equipment are used without adequate ventilation
- Injuries from unguarded chain saws and power tools, or from improperly attempting to clear jams in snow blowers
- Slip-and-fall accidents
- Car accidents when working on or near roadways
- Hypothermia or frostbite

To avoid accidents and injuries, OSHA recommends you:

- Assume all power lines are live
- Make sure all electrical equipment is grounded and properly guarded
- Double-check that power equipment is disconnected before attempting to clear jams, clean it or perform maintenance
- Clearly mark all work zones
- Clear all walking surfaces of snow, ice and water
- Use caution around surfaces weighed down by snow or ice
- Ensure you are using effective fall protection equipment

- Make sure all ladders are properly maintained and used correctly
- Use eye, face and body protection equipment
- Wear reflective clothing
- Use safe work practices to limit the length and severity of exposure to cold

Keep in mind that workers injured while clearing snow and ice during the course of employment are entitled to [workers' compensation](#), and that failure to maintain a safe workplace or place of business could expose employers to personal injury claims, as well.

Stay safe and warm in this inclement weather, and enjoy the rare snow!

Source: OSHA Region 4 News Release, "[US Labor Department's OSHA reminds Georgia employers of hazards associated with ice and snow cleanup, urges proper worker safeguards](#)," January 12, 2011