A Risk Management Bulletin

Resort to Safety
January 2012

Do not assume all of your employees have what you may consider as basic winter knowledge!!

Tips for Healthier Snow Shoveling (On or Off the Job!)
There really is a right and wrong way to shovel snow. Proper snow shoveling techniques can reduce back and neck injuries.
- Before shoveling, warm up with a few stretching exercises.
- Face the snow you’re about to shovel.
- Always keep your back straight, your knees bent, and throw the snow forward. If you bend forward while shoveling, the weight you are lifting increases by 10 times!
- Avoid throwing snow over your shoulder.
- Twisting while throwing snow behind you can cause back strain.
- Push the shovel to move the snow; avoid lifting whenever possible.
- If you have to lift the snow, lift with your legs and not your back.
- Tackle heavy snow in two stages: skim off the snow from the top, then remove the bottom layer. Avoid overloading the shovel.
- Continue to keep your body faced in the direction that you’re shoveling.
- Don’t try to shovel too much too quickly. Allow yourself enough time to do the work.
- Take frequent breaks to stand up and stretch; it is good to stretch your back in the opposite direction.
- Drink water; breathing cold air dehydrates the body.
- Don’t force it. This tip applies especially to using a snow blower. Let the snow blower do the work—don’t try to wrestle with it. Conduct specific training for snow blower operations.

Motor Vehicle Accidents
Do your employees know what they are supposed to do in the event of a motor vehicle accident when driving your company vehicle? All company vehicle drivers should go through at least a basic orientation explaining your expectations for drivers. This should include basic safety issues such as always wearing a seat belt, no cell phone usage while driving, etc.
But what about if there is an accident? Have you provided the tools for the employee to get all the information needed for your insurance company claims adjuster? The best thing is to have all vehicles equipped with a simple accident investigation kit that includes a form that can be completed on the spot, capturing names of all involved parties as well as witnesses, their contact info, and statements about what happened. Be sure there is a pencil/pen included! If you have a disposable camera in the glove compartment, pictures can be taken on the spot. Be sure to include a couple of photos taken from a reasonable distance that takes in the entire scene, as well as any skid marks and close-up shots of the damage, and license plates of vehicles involved. Cell phones with cameras work for this purpose, too, and photos can then be easily emailed. Keep driving safely, but if there is an accident, report all details immediately to your insurance company.

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