



A MINI TRAINING SESSION FOR INJURY PREVENTION

# Quick Take on Safety

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## Navigating Slopes and Hills in Winter

### TRAINING OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

- Overview: Covers the hazards associated with walking along sloped walkways or hills in winter.
- Purpose: Inform employees of hazards and best practices when walking up or down outdoor slopes in winter.
- Preparation: Read and become familiar with this Quick Take. *Change as needed to reflect procedures and personnel in your department.*
- Handouts: Quick Review of Safety—Slopes and Hills
- Notes: This Quick Take is intended to be paired with the Step Wisely awareness materials of the same topic.

### Walking on Slopes and Hills in Winter

Walking along icy level surfaces can be challenging in the first place, but adding an incline or decline makes the task even more difficult. Whenever possible, you should plan to walk on level terrain, but obviously this is not always possible. In those circumstances the following best practices can help to keep you safe, so please pay attention. Your health and safety is important to us; we don't want you to get hurt.

### Best Practices

When ascending or descending slopes keep the following best practices to mind.

- Avoid walking up or down slopes whenever possible. Although it may take more time, consider using another route to avoid slopes or hills.
- Take it slow. Rushing contributes to many falls. Give yourself plenty of time.
- Take small steps or shuffle. This maximizes contact with the ground and allows opportunities for shoe tread to help provide traction.
- Face sideways to the hill when ascending or descending. This allows the opportunity to lean toward the hill for improved center of gravity and gives the shoes a wider grip area to avoid sliding down the hill.
- Stick to areas with some traction wherever possible. Sand, rocks or other traction on a slope often provides more traction than ice. Avoid snow when possible, as snow can conceal ice beneath it, especially after recent snowfalls.



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- Consider using footwear with improved traction designed for icy surfaces. Although these can offer improved traction, the risk of one foot slipping while the other remains fixed can cause some serious injuries. Using these devices does not mean other safety measures can be ignored. Items such as Yaktrax or other over-the-shoe traction devices should be taken off when driving or when indoors. Follow any manufacturer recommendations when using these devices.
- Use railings or other handholds when available. Beware of using items not designed as handholds, such as bushes or branches, as these may break.
- Keep your arms and hands free so you can use your arms for balance.
- Consider carrying some abrasives, such as sand or chicken grit, in a pocket-sized bottle to use to add additional traction for slippery areas. Such a bottle could be kept in your jacket or car and used when necessary.

### **Discussion Questions**

- Where are the most common slopes at our facility? How can we best avoid them?
- What else can we do to prevent slips and falls?

# Navigating Slopes and Hills in Winter Session Planning and Review

Trainer

Training  
Date

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Department(s)

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## TRAINING GOALS

- Employees are reminded of the hazards associated with walking on icy slopes and hills
- Employees are reminded of and follow best practices to reduce injuries when walking on slopes and hills in winter.

## RESOURCES

- Step Wisely Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention campaign materials, Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust, [MCIT.org/step-wisely/](http://MCIT.org/step-wisely/)

## REVIEW

Did the training meet the stated goals?

How can the training be improved?

## TRAINER COMMENTS

