

**HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE
Focus of the Month**

Issue No 8

Winter Weather – Make sure your site is properly prepared

With the onset of poor weather it is worthwhile highlighting the familiar risks associated with this time of year. There have been incidents in previous years of lost time and other injuries/near misses resulting from adverse weather conditions, poor lighting and so on – it is important that you consider these risks before the event rather than afterwards – make sure your site is properly prepared.

Please consider the following to ensure all reasonable controls have been implemented:

Ice/Snow

- Areas used routinely should be gritted – in most cases it will be impractical to grit the whole site, but concentrate on pathways, walkways, doorways / entrances, steps, slopes and assembly points – also consider areas where work is undertaken outside – pallet storage, waste disposal, skip locations, fuel tanks for FLT's / HGV's etc.
- You should have adequate stocks of salt / grit
- Responsibilities should be properly assigned – gritting should ideally take place before the hazard exists (i.e. grit the night before to help keep paths ice free rather than 2 or 3 hours into the morning, when people arriving at work have had the opportunity to fall over)
- Working on vehicles / trailers can be particularly hazardous – vehicle / trailer beds should be covered to prevent contamination – remind contractors.

**Lighting**

- Increased hours of darkness means more working in poor lighting conditions. External lighting needs to be good enough for the tasks being carried out.
- Consider issues such as pallet storage, access to gas tanks for forklifts, waste disposal (filling / emptying / moving skips) etc.
- Ensure housekeeping in external working areas is up to the required standard
- Lights on vehicles should be working correctly and kept clean – before-use checks

Other issues

- Vehicles used outside should offer adequate weather protection
- Exposed pipework may need to be insulated
- Electric heaters often creep in from home – only approved PAT Tested appliances should be used
- Increased risk of flooding – are drains and gullies clear / downpipes in sound condition
- Do you allow vehicles to be jump-started – do people know how to do it?
- When travelling to and from work, ensure lights are clean. Be cautious when driving down roads. If you travel on two wheels it is a cardinal rule that you should wear a high visibility vest or have some form of high visibility stripes on your clothes.



There may be other issues – if you address these now, you may prevent a few accidents over the coming months.

DISCLAIMER: This is the opinion of the NASS H&S Committee but only the courts can interpret the law. All employers should refer to the legislation.