

MICHIGAN



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY: Prevention of work-related injuries & illnesses through research & investigation

WORK-RELATED HOSPITALIZATIONS FROM ICE-RELATED FALL INJURIES IN MICHIGAN

Wintertime in Michigan increases the risk of falling due to icy conditions. According to Michigan's hospital surveillance data, 60 workers were hospitalized in 2014, 54 in 2015, 28 in 2016, 33 in 2017 and 29 in 2018 after falling on the ice at work. Possible reasons for the decrease could be due to better preventive activity or warmer weather, average temperature in Detroit for the months of November, December, January, February and March was 28° F in 2014, 32° F in 2015, 35°F in 2016, 36°F in 2017 and 32°F in 2018.

The injuries identified are just the tip of the proverbial iceberg since they do not include people with less serious injuries who were treated in Emergency Departments, urgent care clinics or a doctor's office. The numbers also do not include hospitalizations where Workers' Compensation was not listed as the expected payer.

All but 30 of the hospitalizations involved fractures. More than half of the fractures were of the lower extremity. Most of these hospitalizations required surgery. Individuals were in the hospital for an average of 3 days (range 1-15 days). Who were these 204 people? Women and men were equally represented. These workers were mostly in their 50s and their ages ranged from 18-85 years. They worked in a variety of industries including health care, manufacturing, public administration, education, wholesale and retail trade, utilities and transportation, construction, arts and entertainment, professional and financial services, agriculture, funeral homes and hotel and food services.

EXAMPLES OF WORK-RELATED HOSPITALIZATIONS FROM ICE-RELATED FALL INJURIES IN MICHIGAN

- A tow truck driver in his 20s broke his leg while getting into his truck when he slipped on ice. He was hospitalized 14 days.
- A grocery store employee in his 60s suffered a head injury when he slipped on ice in the store parking lot. He was hospitalized 10 days.
- A factory worker in his 60s slipped on ice, fell and broke his ribs while unloading boxes from a loading dock. He was hospitalized 4 days.
- An entertainment industry worker in his 20s slipped on ice when packing up electronics equipment. He was hospitalized 2 days for a broken leg.
- A city employee in her 70s slipped on ice and fell down some steps. She was hospitalized 4 days to repair a broken femur.

IN ORDER TO PREVENT SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE

- Keep all walkways cleared of ice and snow.
- Have de-icing products handy for hard-to-remove ice or snow.
- Make sure all walkways & passageways are clearly marked & well-lit.
- Be careful of slippery surfaces inside buildings.
- Wear slip-resistant footwear.
- Practice safe walking on slippery surfaces by taking slow, small steps.
- Step down, not out, from curbs.
- Avoid carrying heavy loads that may offset your balance.
- Clearly mark or barricade hazardous areas.
- Wear sunglasses on sunny days to lessen winter glare.
- Take extra precaution when entering and exiting vehicles.

SOURCE: MIOSHA Tips for Winter Workplace Safety.

RESOURCES

MIOSHA Tips for Winter Workplace Safety. Don't Roll the Dice with Snow and Ice.

https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-10573_70408--,00.html

OSHA Winter Weather. Plan. Equip. Train.

https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter_weather/hazards_precautions.html#walking

OSHA Falls and Other Hazards to Workers Removing Snow from Rooftops and Other Elevated Surfaces.

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA-3513roof-snow-hazard.pdf>

Cold Stress. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/coldstress/>

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DID YOU KNOW?

- A study from Maine showed ice related falls were more common in the morning and higher-injury days occurred when there were snowfall events, when temperatures remained below freezing following snowfall events or when snowfall accumulations were subject to daily thawing and re-freezing.
https://www.maine.gov/labor/labor_stats/publications/injuries/SlipFallOnIce.pdf