

## BE PREPARED FOR... *COLD WEATHER HAZARDS*



If you have lived in northern Illinois for a while, it is likely that you already have a good idea how to cope with the hazards created by cold weather. However, reviewing the major types of wintertime accidents and their prevention can further improve your odds of surviving another season without injury.

Although the Lab's overall rate of occupational injuries tends to remain fairly constant throughout the year, the rate for slip accidents increases by 50% during the months from December through February. Not surprisingly, ice is involved in one-half of these cases. Workers often slip on flat icy surfaces with the most serious injuries resulting from impact to or sudden effort of the back. There is also a modest increase (~15%) in

the rate of injuries resulting from employees being struck by or against things. Many of these are caused by rushing to get out of the cold and/or clumsiness caused by bulky clothing. Other hazards made worse by winter weather include vehicle accidents, problems with heaters, and cold weather exposure.



### **SLIPS**

**Walk Carefully** - Be aware that paved parking lots and walkways may still be covered with a layer of ice. *Do the "duck walk."* Instead of walking heel to toe, take short flat steps to help sustain your balance. Wear boots with treads; add strap-on cleats if you spend a lot of time walking on ice. Leave high-heeled shoes at home. To the extent possible, stay on cleared walkways to ensure safe passage from parking lots to your work. Use handrails wherever available.

**Help keep pathways clear** - Fermilab's Roads & Grounds Department is responsible for snow removal and they recently established pathway clearance priorities based upon input from building managers. However, road clearance is their top priority. If walkways

and doorways in your area need clearing, please help out. In some cases salt and/or

shovels have been made available for your use. *[NOTE: Avoid shoveling if you cannot do so safely.]* Contact your building manager if you would like additional ice/snow removal equipment.

### **VEHICLES**

**Drive Carefully** - Make sure your car windows are thoroughly cleared. Adjust your speed for road conditions. If you skid, *do not brake*. Instead, take your foot off the accelerator and turn gently into the skid. Put blankets, some candy, and water in your car in case you get stranded. To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, keep a window opened a bit and do not run vehicles in your garage.

**Avoid parking in lots or on streets for extended periods** - This will make snow removal easier. Cars will be towed by the Lab if the owner does not move it within 10 days of being notified that the car is considered "abandoned." Notify the Security Department if you will be out of town and leaving your car at Fermilab for an extended period.

### **HEATERS**

Portable heaters that burn hydrocarbon fuels (e.g., *salamanders*) can produce hazardous levels of carbon monoxide if combustion is incomplete, especially in poorly ventilated areas. It's a good idea to have your division/section ES&H personnel and/or the ES&H Section check on atmospheric carbon monoxide levels when you first begin using such heaters. If you use electric portable heaters make sure that the appliance is UL listed and has an anti tip over switch built in. You can test the appliance by turning the ON switch and then slowly tipping the appliance to verify that power is disconnected from the heating element. The heater should not be placed any closer than 36 inches away from combustible materials. Use the lowest heat setting that provides adequate comfort.

### **COLD EXPOSURE**

Wear loose fitting layered lightweight clothing and using several layers. Outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent. Use mittens, since they are warmer than gloves. Wear sunglasses for winter glare. Wear proper boots for protection and comfort.

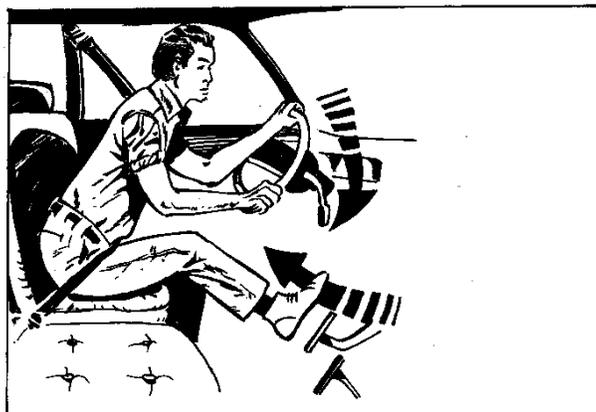
### **WEATHER-RELATED INFORMATION**

Up-to-the-minute winter weather information can be found at the following website: [www.icepack.com](http://www.icepack.com). A link to this URL has been added to the ES&H Section's homepage under "Alerts." If severe winter weather such as a major snowstorm hits the area, you should listen for closing information on the following broadcast stations.

<b>WMAQ</b>	<b>670 AM</b>	<b>CBS-TV</b>	<b>CH2</b>
<b>WGN</b>	<b>720 AM</b>	<b>WGN-TV</b>	<b>CH9</b>
<b>WBBM</b>	<b>780 AM</b>	<b>FOX-TV</b>	<b>CH32</b>
		<b>CLTV-NEWS</b>	

Please do not call the Communications Center for closing information. Instead dial 1-630-840-5995 for a recorded message regarding the Laboratory's work hours. Alternatively, you may call the *EMERGENCY CLOSING CENTER HOTLINE* at

1-900-407-SNOW. There is a 95 cent per minute charge for calling this number, though most calls should require less than one minute. You will need to enter Fermilab's main phone number, (630) 840-3000, to receive the correct message.



**If your car skids, *do not brake*. Take your foot off the accelerator and turn your car in the direction that you want the front wheels to go.**

*This message should be distributed to all employees via delivery of un-addressed copies to Fermilab mail stations.*