



Snow Removal Safety

Preparing for inclement weather is crucial to ensure the safety of your students and visitors and the smooth operation of your facilities. In any size storm, grounds and custodial departments prioritize clearing snow from the areas that will be most heavily trafficked the day of the storm, such as walkways, sidewalks, steps near entrances, and parking lots.

Adopting the correct posture makes shoveling easy and reduces the risk of injury. Remember to bend the knees and lift with the legs. Push the snow with the shovel rather than lifting it to reduce strain on the body. When pushing the snow, keep the shovel blade close to the body. This can reduce strain on the back muscles.

Additionally, maintaining a stock of winter supplies is critical. This includes rock salt or ice melt for de-icing walkways and parking areas. Utilize shovels, snow blowers, and plows for snow removal and have sand for additional traction.

If using a snowblower, wear goggles or glasses to protect your eyes from flying debris, especially if you are unclogging the machine. While clearing snow, wear bright or reflective clothing, be aware of traffic, especially near the end of the day when it gets darker, and wear boots with traction to avoid slipping. When moving or picking up a snow blower, it should be turned off, and the spark plug should be disconnected to prevent accidental starts. Do not try to lift the machine from the bottom, even if it's not running.

For vehicles plowing snow, be sure the area is well illuminated, as much of the snow removal around school grounds is conducted in the early morning hours. Also, vehicles should be equipped with backing alarms as some plowing occurs very close to school buildings and exit doors, so vehicle backing around these doors will alert persons exiting the building nearby.

When conducting any outdoor maintenance this winter, always remember to dress in layers of warm clothing and cover your hands, head, and face to prevent frostbite.