

# January Safety Sense

## AVOID SLIP UPS!

Did you know that falls rival poisoning as the number one home accident in the U.S.? Up to 90% of the 300,000 hip fractures that occur each year are from falls! The number of injuries or deaths from falls due to winter conditions is not recorded by the NSC (National Safety Council). But, safety experts agree that many injuries result from falls on ice-covered surfaces.

It is important that individuals recognize the hazards of slippery surfaces. Here are some helpful hints from winter-safety experts that will reduce the risk of falling when slippery conditions exist.

- Wear boots or overshoes with soles. Avoid wading in shoes that have smooth surfaces that would increase the risk of falls.
- Walk consciously. Be alert to the possibility that you could quickly slip on an unseen patch of ice.
- Walk cautiously. Your arms help you keep balance. Don't walk with your hands in your pockets and try to avoid carrying heavy loads that could throw you off balance.
- Walk "small". Avoid a "marching posture". Look ahead of where you step. When you step on icy areas, take short steps and walk as flat footed as possible.
- Remove snow immediately before it becomes packed and/or turns to ice. Keep your porch/stoop, steps, walks and driveways free of ice by frequently applying ice melter granules. This is the best way to prevent dangerous ice patches.

Even when you practice safe walking habits, slipping on ice is sometimes unavoidable. It takes approximately less than two seconds from the moment you slip until you hit the ground. If you should slip and fall on ice it is important to protect your head and be cautious of breaking your fall with your hands as you could cause a wrist injury.

