



THE WINTER MONTHS ARE DANGEROUS:

The past few years have seen record-breaking winters in New York City. As temperatures continue to drop and unprecedented amounts of snow and ice fall on streets and sidewalks, many dangerous conditions arise. Slips and falls on snow and ice outside and slippery conditions tracked indoors can result in serious injuries, including broken bones and torn ligaments. These injuries can happen to young and old alike. This guide will help you stay prepared in the event that you fall victim to snow and ice hazards this winter.

YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS:

Property owners are required by law to keep their premises safe and free of weather - related hazards inside and outside. This includes surrounding sidewalks, parking lots, and common areas. These rules apply to the owners of residential, commercial, and government properties.

After a snowfall, it is imperative that property owners clear snow and ice and lay down salt to their surrounding sidewalks. This prevents the accumulation of hard, slippery ice that often builds and hides underneath fresh snowfall.

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SLIPS & FALLS ON SNOW AND ICE

What to do if you Slip and Fall in
Dangerous Winter Conditions



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SLIPS & FALLS ON SNOW & ICE

OUTDOOR HAZARDS:

- **Failure to remove snow and ice:** Property owners have a responsibility to clear ice and snow from their properties in a **reasonable timeframe** after a snowfall. If they fail to do so they may be liable for any injuries and medical bills incurred.
- **Hidden Ice:** Hidden ice accumulates under fresh fallen snow, causing an unexpected slippery and hard surface when the foot makes contact through the powder.
 - Hidden ice occurs when there is poor clearing or a lack of appropriate salting from snowfall, which is then covered by a second layer of snowfall.
 - Hidden ice tends to occur most often when there have been multiple snow storms within a short period of time.
 - Cement sidewalks are particularly dangerous due to how difficult it is to clear hardened ice from the surface. Be very wary about stepping into a pile of fresh snow on a sidewalk.
- **Ice Patches:** These can occur for a variety of reasons, such as drain runoff.
 - Ice patches are particularly common in parking lots, where the surface area causes puddles to form and then freeze, often invisible to the naked eye due to the dark coloring of the pavement.

INDOOR HAZARDS:

- **Tracked-In Snow/Water:** This occurs when snow-covered boots and umbrellas deposit snow and ice on slick floors, which then melts into dangerous puddles. This is particularly common in places like apartment buildings and grocery stores.
 - Failure of property owners to place adequate carpet "runners", mats, or "wet floor" warnings creates risk.
 - Properties with slick floor materials such as hardwood and marble must be extra vigilant in keeping the floors dry and clean.
 - The addition to dirt and debris in tracked-in puddles can make falls even more dangerous.

- **Leaks:** Leaks may cause puddles to form on slippery surfaces that can raise the risks of slips and falls.
 - Cracks in the building structure may allow snow to melt through. This is especially common with unstable roofs and ceilings under the substantial weight of snowfall.
 - Plumbing may swell and crack when low temperatures cause the water coursing through them to freeze. This may lead to the pipe bursting or simply leaking water onto floors.
 - If you live in an apartment, the risks of slipping due to a leak may extend to your own private residence. Keep a sharp eye out for any cracks, sags, or discoloration in the structure of your apartment. You may be at risk for a ceiling collapse that can occur without warning leaving you severely injured.

If you witness ongoing dangerous conditions that may lead to a serious slip and fall injury, call 311 and report the property owner.

IF YOU ARE INJURED IN A SLIP & FALL ACCIDENT:

- **Call an ambulance immediately:** While you may feel inclined to "walk it off" common slip and fall injuries like sprains and strains may worsen without proper medical care.
- **Take note of your surroundings:** Keep in mind any conditions that may have led to your accident. Being able to recall how/where you slipped and fall will be critical to identifying the responsible parties for your injuries.
- **If possible, ask to file an accident report:** If you fall at a business or an apartment complex with a superintendent, you should make an immediate record of your fall.
- **Take photographs!** It is imperative to take photos of the conditions that caused your injuries before employees of property owners can attempt to cover up the incident by removing the hazardous condition.
- **Take down witness information:** Get their names and contact information of anyone nearby who may have witnessed your fall. These witnesses can be

critical to not only proving your incident occurred, but that the dangerous condition before the incident. The more time a dangerous condition existed without the property owner taking steps to remedy it, the easier it is to hold them responsible for your injuries.

AFTER YOUR ACCIDENT:

- **Call us** as soon as possible to notify us of your accident so we can start the process of investigating your claim. We have a special team of staff members dedicated to taking photos of the condition that caused your accident before it disappears and taking witness statements before they become unsympathetic or forgetful. They are also expert at identifying and obtaining surveillance footage of your accident.
- **Keep track of your injuries,** especially aches and pains that may arise in the days following the accident. Many injuries may not be immediately obvious to a victim until some time has passed.

CALL US 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK FOR A FREE CONSULTATION ABOUT YOUR SLIP & FALL INJURY.

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For more information contact the

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