



Weekly Safety Tip

Snow Shoveling Safety



PROPER TECHNIQUE FOR SHOVELLING SNOW



Keep feet wide apart. Put weight on front foot close to shovel and use leg to push shovel straight ahead.



Shift weight to rear foot and keep shovel-load close to body. Lift with arms and legs, not back.



Turn feet in the direction of throw and pivot entire body rather than twisting at the waist.

To shovel snow safely, you can:

- **Protect your back:** Bend at the knees, not your waist, and lift with your legs.
- **Take breaks:** Rest often, especially if you're not used to shoveling.
- **Use the right shovel:** Use a smaller shovel or fill a larger shovel partway.
- **Don't twist:** Avoid twisting your body.
- **Pace yourself:** Don't work to the point of exhaustion.
- **Wear layers:** Remove layers as you get warmer.
- **Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water.
- **Shovel in stages:** Shovel a couple of inches at a time, then rest.
- **Throw snow forward:** Throw the snow in front of you, not over your shoulder.
- **Shovel away from your foundation:** Avoid piling snow up next to your foundation.

10 Snow Removal Tips

1. Keep snow from sticking to your shovel or the chute in your snow blower by spraying these surfaces with a silicone lubricant or cooking spray (if you don't have silicone.).
2. When shoveling, keep the shovel close to your body. This will help prevent overreaching with heavy loads and can help minimize back strain.
3. If heavy or blowing snow is expected, cover cars or walkways and other areas with tarps for easy snow removal the next day.
4. Switch out metal-edged shovels with plastic shovels for clearing uneven pavement and wood surfaces like porches and decks. Metal edges catch easily on uneven surfaces and can damage wood and concrete.
5. Keep shovels with a metal edge at least 1/2-inch above surfaces while shoveling.
6. Rock salt can make cracks in concrete worse. Instead, choose nontoxic calcium magnesium acetate compounds to melt snow and ice on asphalt and concrete.
7. Shovel often. Don't wait for the storm to end to remove snow. Try to stay ahead of the accumulation to prevent unnecessary muscle strain and fatigue.
8. If you can't shovel during the storm, once the storm is over, remove snow by shoveling in layers. Take the top layer first and work your way down.
9. Flat, low-volume shovels help prevent picking up too much load for each lift.
10. Plan ahead. Make sure snow throwers are functioning properly and have adequate oil and gasoline.

David A. Varwig, CSP-retired and SCNWO Board Member *for*



Weekly Safety



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Workers With Chronic Conditions

Most Workers with Chronic Conditions Haven't Told Employer



Many workers who are suffering from chronic conditions are not telling their employers, according to a national poll, [U.S. Employee Perspectives on Managing Chronic Conditions in the Workplace](#) by the Harvard School of Public Health and de Beaumont Foundation.

The poll found that three-fourths (76%) of those with chronic conditions—such as hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and asthma—need to manage their conditions during work hours.

Yet the majority (60%) have not formally disclosed their conditions to their employer.

While more than half of those polled, 58%, report having physical chronic health conditions, they are struggling with getting treatment and managing their jobs. **36% reported either skipping medical appointments or delaying care to avoid interfering with work in the past year.** And about half of those with chronic conditions say they felt they could not take time off work (49%) or take a break while at work (49%), even though they needed to because of their conditions.

Though employers may think they know their employees' needs, poll results suggest there are widespread and frequently hidden challenges facing workers with chronic conditions. Workers commonly feel stigmatized by their conditions, and this can have a profound effect on both their work and their health.

While workers say their employer is supportive of key measures that allow employees to manage their conditions, including allowing employees to take breaks when they feel they need it (44%) or take paid leave (44%). Fewer than 4 in 10 say their employer is very supportive of flexible schedules or working remotely more often if the work can be done offsite (37% and 27%, respectively).

One-third of employees are also helping family members with chronic disease and 45% report having to attend to family during working hours. However, 37% said it's difficult to take time off work to do that and 25% have found that they have had to reduce work hours to manage chronic conditions for family members or themselves. 14% of these employees have also run out of paid leave in the past year, and 12% don't have any paid leave as part of their job.

The [CDC highlights the most common chronic diseases](#) as follows:

Heart disease and stroke. Nothing kills more Americans than heart disease and stroke. More than 944,800 Americans die of heart disease or stroke every year—that's more than 1 in 3 deaths.

Cancer. Each year in the United States, 1.7 million people are diagnosed with cancer, and more than 600,000 die from it, making it the second leading cause of death.

Diabetes. More than 38 million Americans have diabetes, and another 98 million adults in the United States have prediabetes, which puts them at risk for type 2 diabetes. Diabetes can cause serious complications, including heart disease, kidney failure, and blindness.

Obesity. Obesity affects 20% of children and 42% of adults, putting them at risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. Just over 1 in 3 young adults aged 17 to 24 are too heavy to join the U.S. military.

Arthritis. Arthritis affects 53.2 million adults in the United States, which is about 1 in 5 adults. It is a leading cause of disability in the United States, and a leading cause of chronic pain.

Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease a type of dementia, is an irreversible, progressive brain disease that affects nearly 7 million Americans, including 1 in 9 adults aged 65 and older. Two-thirds of these older adults (4.2 million) are women. **Deaths due to Alzheimer's disease more than doubled between 2000 and 2021, increasing 141%.**

Epilepsy. In the United States, about 3 million adults and about half a million children and teens younger than 18 have active epilepsy—meaning that they have been diagnosed by a doctor, are taking epilepsy medicines, had a recent seizure, or both. Adults with epilepsy report worse physical and mental health, and more work limitations compared to adults without epilepsy.

Tooth decay. Cavities (also called tooth decay) are one of the most common chronic diseases in the United States. One in six children aged 6 to 11 years and 1 in 4 adults have untreated cavities, which can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems eating, speaking, and learning.



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