

The weather is now getting colder and winter weather may not be that far off. In an effort to help you prepare to deal with snow and ice at DCLS locations, the Safety Committee would like to pass on the following information:

1. Staff members at each of the branches will have greater role in the coming months in keeping sidewalks cleared of snow and salted for ice. All able-bodied employees should be prepared to assist in clearing snow. Please monitor the conditions of sidewalks and parking lots frequently during inclement weather and address as needed.
2. Communicate worsening conditions to managers and supervisors.
3. Follow safe shoveling techniques. These include the following tips provided by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00060>)

General Tips for Safe Snow Clearing

- **Check with your doctor.** Because this activity places high stress on the heart, you should always speak with your doctor before shoveling or snow blowing. If you have a medical condition or do not exercise regularly, consider hiring someone to remove the snow.
- **Dress appropriately.** Light, layered, water-repellent clothing provides both ventilation and insulation. It is also important to wear the appropriate head coverings, as well as mittens or gloves and thick, warm socks. Avoid falls by wearing shoes or boots that have slip-resistant soles.
- **Start early.** Try to clear snow early and often. Begin shoveling/snowblowing when a light covering of snow is on the ground to avoid dealing with packed, heavy snow.
- **Clear vision.** Be sure you can see what you are shoveling/snowblowing. Do not let a hat or scarf block your vision. Watch for ice patches and uneven surfaces.

Tips for Snow Shoveling

- **Warm-up your muscles.** Shoveling can be a vigorous activity. Before you begin this physical workout, warm-up your muscles for 10 minutes with light exercise.
- **Pace yourself.** Snow shoveling and snow blowing are aerobic activities. Take frequent breaks and prevent dehydration by drinking plenty of fluids. If you experience chest pain, shortness of breath, or other signs of a heart attack, stop the activity and seek emergency care.
- **Proper equipment.** Use a shovel that is comfortable for your height and strength. Do not use a shovel that is too heavy or too long for you. Space your hands on the tool grip to increase your leverage.
- **Proper lifting.** Try to push the snow instead of lifting it. If you must lift, do it properly. Squat with your legs apart, knees bent, and back straight. Lift with your legs. Do not bend at the waist. Scoop small amounts of snow into the shovel and walk to where you want to dump it. Holding a shovelful of snow with your arms outstretched puts too much weight on your spine. Never remove deep snow all at once. Do it in pieces.
- **Safe technique.** Do not throw the snow over your shoulder or to the side. This requires a twisting motion that stresses your back.

4. Take care to prevent injury to yourself while you are making it safe for others. *(If you do experience an injury or witness a slip or fall then report it using the unusual occurrence form and seek appropriate medical attention, if needed.)*