

# SAFETY TALK



NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY • UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE • NORTH DAKOTA LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## FALLING HAZARD – ICE & SNOW

When snow falls, so do people. One of the most threatening winter hazards comes from snow and ice, which increases the potential to slip and fall. These falls can result in serious injuries including lacerations, broken bones, and even traumatic brain injuries.



### HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL HINTS WHEN WALKING ON SNOW OR ICE:

- **Plan ahead:** Plan your trips outdoor around the weather. If you don't need to go out, DON'T! Wait for the weather and sidewalks to clear. Allow yourself enough time to get where you are going. Your chances of falling increase when you are rushing.
- **Take the path of least resistance:** Look for the safest route to your location AND the safest route into the building. Choose alternate routes when necessary. For example, if the sidewalk or entrance you typically use is icy, find a different route that perhaps has been shoveled or has better sunlight to help with melting.
- **Footwear:** Wear shoes or boots that provide traction on snow and ice. Footwear made of rubber and neoprene composite provide better traction than plastic and leather soles. Avoid shoes with heels.
- **Over-the-Shelf Products:** There are a variety of products available with abrasive soles or cleats that provide special traction for walking on snow and ice, such as Yaktrax. These products slip over your footwear and give you excellent traction and control. Remember to remove them when entering buildings.



- **Be aware of parking lots:** Use care when entering and exiting vehicles. Hold onto your door or car as you get in and out. Leave items in your car until you exit. After exiting, reach back into vehicle to get your coffee...we don't want any spilled coffee!

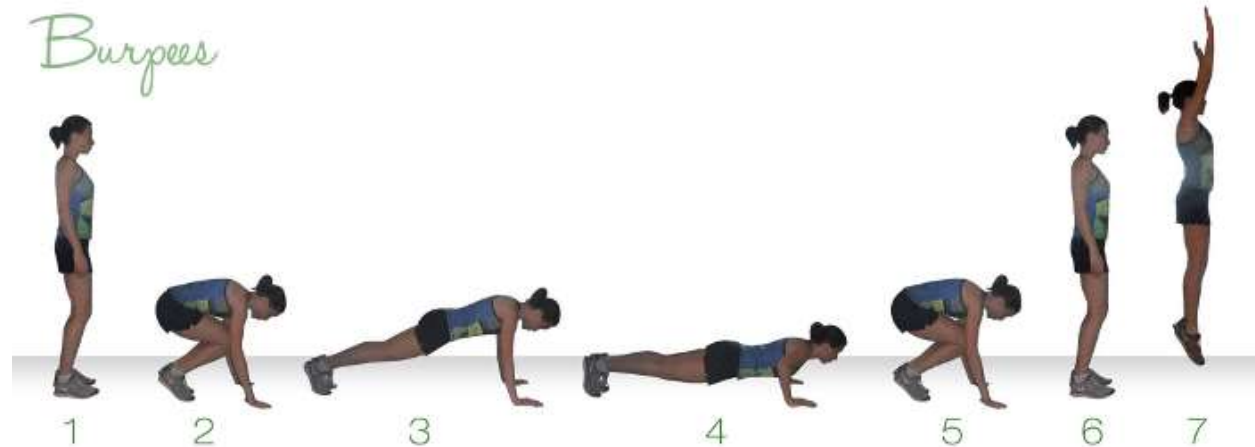
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- Walk this way: Try to keep your center of gravity over your support leg. Use handrails for support. Keep your hands out of your pockets. Walk on designated walkways as much as possible. Don't take shortcuts over snow piles or areas where snow and ice removal is not feasible. Look ahead when you walk. A sidewalk completely covered with ice may require travel along its grassy edge for traction. Don't text or read while walking. Take short steps or shuffle for stability. Bend slightly forward and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over your feet as much as possible.
- Fall completely: Be prepared to fall. If you fall, fall with sequential contacts at your calf, thigh, buttocks and back of shoulder. Avoid using outstretched arms to brace yourself. Bend your back and head forward to avoid hitting your head against the ground. Let the fall happen.

These helpful hints will improve your chances of staying on your feet in snowy and icy conditions. It is always great practice to keep stairs/steps, walkways, door steps and lots clear of snow and ice. If ice begins to develop, spread ice melt to remove. Remember that if you happen to fall, do a burpee! Be safe out there!



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