



Fall and Winter Weather Preparations and Slip and Fall Prevention

Office of Risk Management

October Virtual Training Session
October 9, 2025



The Guessing Game

How much money is spent on medical costs and compensation associated with slip and fall accidents each year in the United States?

Slip and fall accidents lead to approximately \$70 billion in medical expenses and workers' compensation payouts each year in the U.S.



FALL AND WINTER PREPATIONS AND SLIP AND FALL PREVENTIONS CYCLE

PREPARATIONS

INSPECTIONS

OPERATIONS

OBSERVATIONS

DOCUMENTATION

RESTORATION



Preparations

Communications

- Maintain a clearly defined inclement weather policy and share it widely with the parish community before winter weather arrives.
- Ensure communication systems (email, text, social media, bulletin) are updated with current contacts.
- Communicate weather-related delays and closures promptly and consistently across all platforms.
- Consider livestream options for Masses and parish ministries during inclement weather.
- Keep the parish bulletin, website, and signage updated with fall and winter safety reminders (e.g., walking safely, proper footwear, staying home if conditions are dangerous).
- Ensure coordination between parish and school on scheduling and operations

Preparations

General Preparations and Planning

General Preparations and Planning

- Create and maintain a Winter Safety Plan.
- Train backup volunteers for key roles in case of illness or weather-related absences.
- Establish a snow and ice removal plan (e.g., hired service or volunteer rotation).
- Ensure contracted services have response time requirements in the contract and provide the required certificate of insurance.
- Stock and secure supplies such as salt, sand, snow shovels, and heat cables.
- Train staff and volunteers on winter hazard recognition (ice, slippery surfaces, frostbite, etc.).

Preparations

Supplies and Equipment

Supplies and Equipment

- Ensure first-aid kits and flashlights are fully stocked and accessible.
- Prepare a winter emergency kit (blankets, batteries, flashlights, non-perishable snacks, water).
- Stock up early on ice melt, sand, and shovels.
- Maintain seasonal equipment: doormats, snow blowers, shovels, and leaf blowers.
- Promote flu and COVID prevention through signage health reminders and supplies.

Preparations

Heating and Energy Efficiency

- Schedule an HVAC inspection and replace filters. Test thermostats and space heaters for proper function.
- Review emergency heating and power outage plans.
- Have a professional inspect and service boilers/furnaces before freezing temperatures. Remember the annual maintenance program for boilers.
- Maintain backup heating options (portable indoor-safe heaters) and ensure staff know safe operation procedures.

Preparations

Plumbing

- Check for leaks or drips and repair promptly.
- In extreme cold, allow faucets to drip slightly to prevent freezing.
- Label water shut-off valves and ensure key staff know their locations and how to use them.
- If you have a building not used during winter months drain down system and treat with anti-freeze.

Preparations

Lighting and Power

- Replace dim or burned-out bulbs, focusing on exterior and entryway areas.
- Test and fuel backup generators and ensure staff are trained in their use.
- Check emergency lighting and exit sign batteries regularly.

Preparations

Interior Accommodations

- Place entryway mats and umbrella stands to reduce wet floors.
- Use “transition mats” with bristles and absorbent cores near entrances to dry shoes.

Preparations

Landscaping and Exterior Grounds

- Clear leaves and debris to prevent slippery walkways.
- Trim trees and shrubs away from buildings and power lines.
- Create snow garden barriers such as shrubs or install snow fences to reduce snow drift across walkways.

Preparations

Vehicles and Transportation

- Winterize parish vehicles (check antifreeze, windshield wipers, and tire tread).
- Establish safe driving protocols for staff and volunteers involved in transport ministries.
- Keep emergency supplies in vehicles (ice scraper, blanket, flashlight, first aid).

Preparations

Longer Term Safety and Infrastructure Improvements

- Porous paving materials: Use permeable concrete or pavers that allow water to drain instead of refreezing.
- Anti-slip coatings: Apply textured or grit paint to outdoor steps and ramps.
- Smart drainage design: Adjust walkway slopes or add drainage channels to reduce puddling and ice.
- UV-sensitive ice indicators: Use color-changing paint or decals that warn of freezing temps.
- Strategic lighting: Add motion-activated LED pathway lights to highlight slippery areas.

Preparations

Final Winter Prep Review

- Check all maintenance tasks are complete before first freeze.
- Schedule professional inspections if needed (roof, HVAC, plumbing).
- Document completed maintenance for insurance or facility records.
- Communicate emergency contacts and procedures to staff or volunteers.

Inspection

Building Exterior and Structure

- Inspect walls and siding for cracks or gaps; repair immediately to prevent freeze–thaw damage.
- Seal windows and doors to eliminate drafts and maintain energy efficiency.
- Trim trees, bushes, and shrubs away from the building.
- Check outdoor lighting; replace broken or dead bulbs.
- Inspect and repair railings around entrances and stairs.
- Repair walkways and parking lots to eliminate uneven surfaces and prevent ice buildup.



Inspection

Roof and Gutters

- Inspect the roof for cracks, leaks, loose shingles, blistering, cupping, or loss of granulation.
- Clean gutters, downspouts, and drains to ensure proper water flow and prevent ice dams.
- Check roof valleys and flashing for debris or gaps.
- Ensure downspouts divert runoff away from the foundation.
- Know your snow load capacity and arrange snow removal as needed.
- Keep roof drainage clear to prevent pooling and ice formation.

Inspection

Plumbing & Water Systems

- Fix plumbing leaks to prevent frozen pipes.
- Wrap pipes and insulate exposed plumbing to avoid bursting.
- Turn off and cover exterior water faucets.
- Disconnect and store outdoor hoses.
- Drain and blow out sprinkler/irrigation systems. This includes dry sprinkler systems as well.
- Insulate the water heater and hot water pipes to save energy.

Inspection

Heating, Insulation and Ventilation

- Check insulation in attics, walls, and crawl spaces for effectiveness.
- Seal gaps and cracks to retain heat and prevent moisture intrusion.
- Ensure heating vents and radiators are unobstructed.
- Test heating systems before sustained cold weather arrives.
- Inspect ventilation systems to ensure proper airflow and moisture control.
- Monitor indoor humidity levels to reduce condensation and mold.

Inspection

Fire Safety

Fire & Safety Systems

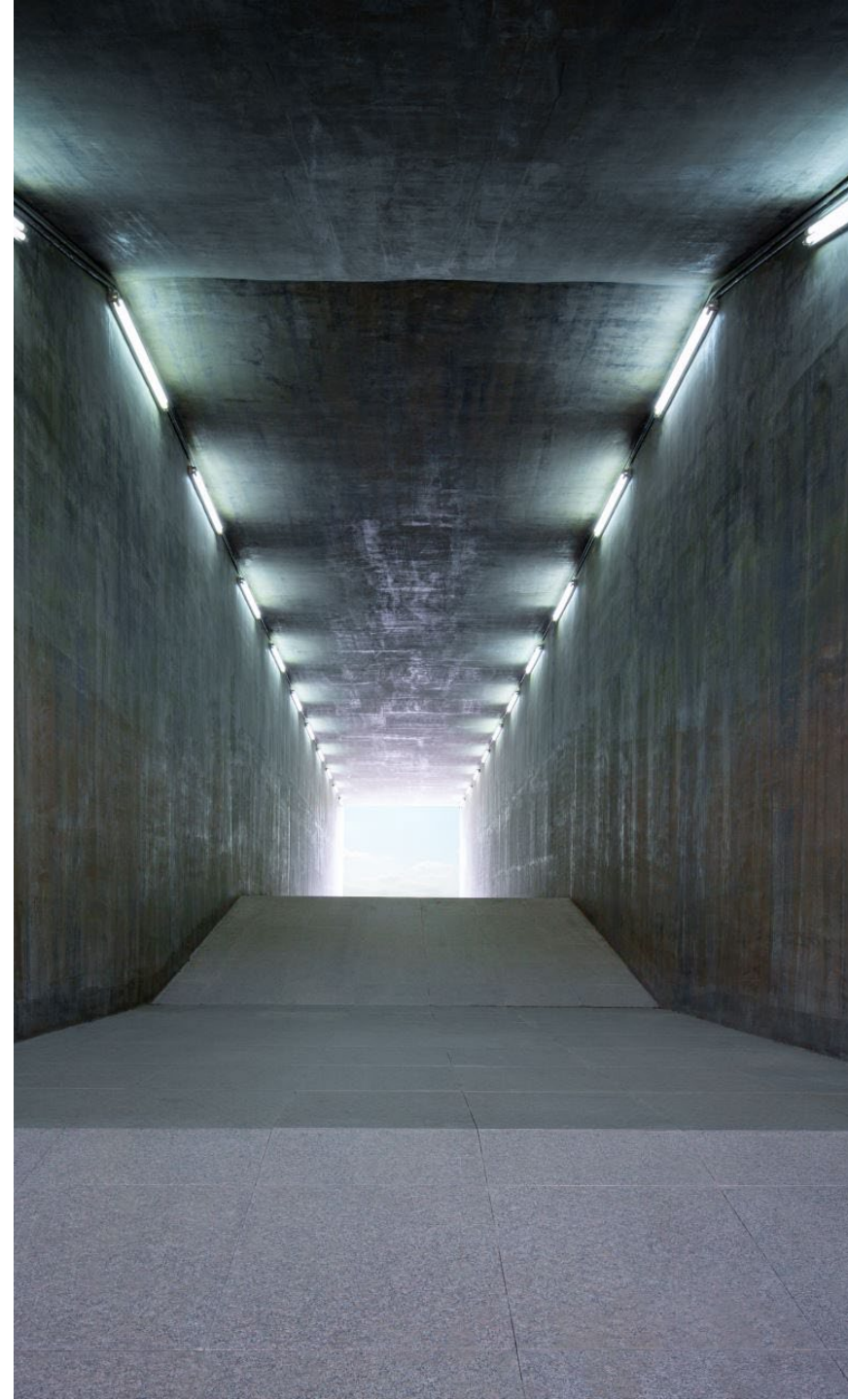
- Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; replace batteries.
- Inspect fire extinguishers and ensure accessibility.
- Keep heating equipment clear of flammable materials and decorations.
- Inspect electrical cords and outlets for wear or damage.



Inspection

Walkways and Grounds

- Fill cracks and holes in walkways and parking lots.
- Ensure proper drainage to prevent pooling water and ice.
- Keep entrances, exits, and emergency paths clear.



Observations

- Prepare early for changing weather conditions—anticipate rain, ice, or snow.
- Monitor the weather; cycles of freezing, melting and re-freezing are especially dangerous
- Monitor local weather forecasts
- Keep walking surfaces clean and dry to reduce slip hazards.
- Promote safe behavior and encourage the use of proper footwear with good traction.
- Everyone plays a role in keeping our environment safe—speak up when you see hazards.
- Inspect high-traffic areas regularly to identify and correct potential risks quickly.
- Assign staff or volunteers to do quick morning “ice patrols” — reporting and addressing slick spots before opening hours.



Employee and Volunteer Safety

#1 Priority

Attire

- Layers- Heavy coats
- Protect hands and face
- Footwear
- High visibility vests/Bright Clothing
- Gloves
- Eyewear
- Hearing protection
- Hydration
- Frequent breaks
- Warm up and stretch prior to working
- Ensure physical fit to perform duties

Operations

Walkway and Parking Lot Safety

- Designate safe travel paths to and from the building; discourage shortcuts that may be icy or unsafe.
- Apply salt, sand, or de-ice early and reapply regularly to prevent ice buildup.
- Plow snow below walkway grade to prevent melting and refreezing downhill.
- Manage snow piles so meltwater doesn't drain onto walkways.
- Use anti-ice sprays (e.g., eco-friendly calcium magnesium acetate) before storms.

Operations

Walkway and Parking Lot Safety

- Mark hazardous areas with cones or signage.
- Provide adequate lighting for all walkways and parking areas.
- Report and address hazards immediately — shovel, salt, or notify maintenance.
- Use designated walkways only; avoid shortcuts.
- Step carefully in parking lots: step flat-footed off curbs and exit vehicles with both feet on the ground.

Operations

Safe Walking Practices

- Walk slowly and deliberately on snow or ice.
- Take short steps and keep your center of balance over your feet.
- Wear proper footwear:
 - Slip-resistant soles
 - Deep treads
 - Wide, low heels
 - Add cleats or ice grips if needed

Operations

Safe Walking Practices

Safe Walking Practices

- Avoid heels or smooth-soled shoes.
- Carry less or use a bag/backpack to keep hands free for balance.
- Use handrails on stairs and ramps.
- Focus on footing — put phones away while walking.
- Stay alert to freezing–melting–refreezing cycles, which create hidden ice.

Operations

Building Temperature & Energy Management

- Keep interior temperatures at least 55°F to protect plumbing.
- Use programmable thermostats to lower temps to 55°F when unoccupied and raise for services/activities.
- Cover cold floors with rugs or carpets to reduce drafts through gaps. Do so thoughtful to avoid trip hazards.

Operations

Building Temperature & Energy Management

- Run ceiling fans clockwise during heating periods to circulate warm air downward.
- Encourage guests to sit toward the front and close together to generate warmth.
- Use smaller rooms for gatherings when possible.
- Group activities on the same day to reduce heating load.
- Set thermostats for winter efficiency per your HVAC recommendations.

Operations

Indoor Safety and Entryway Maintenance

- Place absorbent mats inside and outside entrances.
- Ensure mats lie flat — no bunching or curling edges.
- Use “wet floor” signs during storms or high moisture conditions.
- Clean and dry floors regularly — maintain a log of cleaning schedules.
- Remove tracked-in moisture immediately.


Operations

Communication & Continuous Safety


- Remind staff and congregation regularly of safe winter practices.
- Encourage coworkers or volunteers to follow and reinforce safety rules.
- Make de-ice, salt, and shovels accessible for quick response.
- Document incidents and corrective actions for future prevention.

Documentation


Clarity and consistency – Written procedures make sure all staff, departments, or team members follow the same steps, reducing confusion in stressful situations.



Accountability – Documentation clearly shows who is responsible for each task (for example, salting walkways, checking heating systems, or communicating closures).



Training and preparedness – New employees or volunteers can quickly learn the established procedures instead of relying on verbal instructions or guesswork.

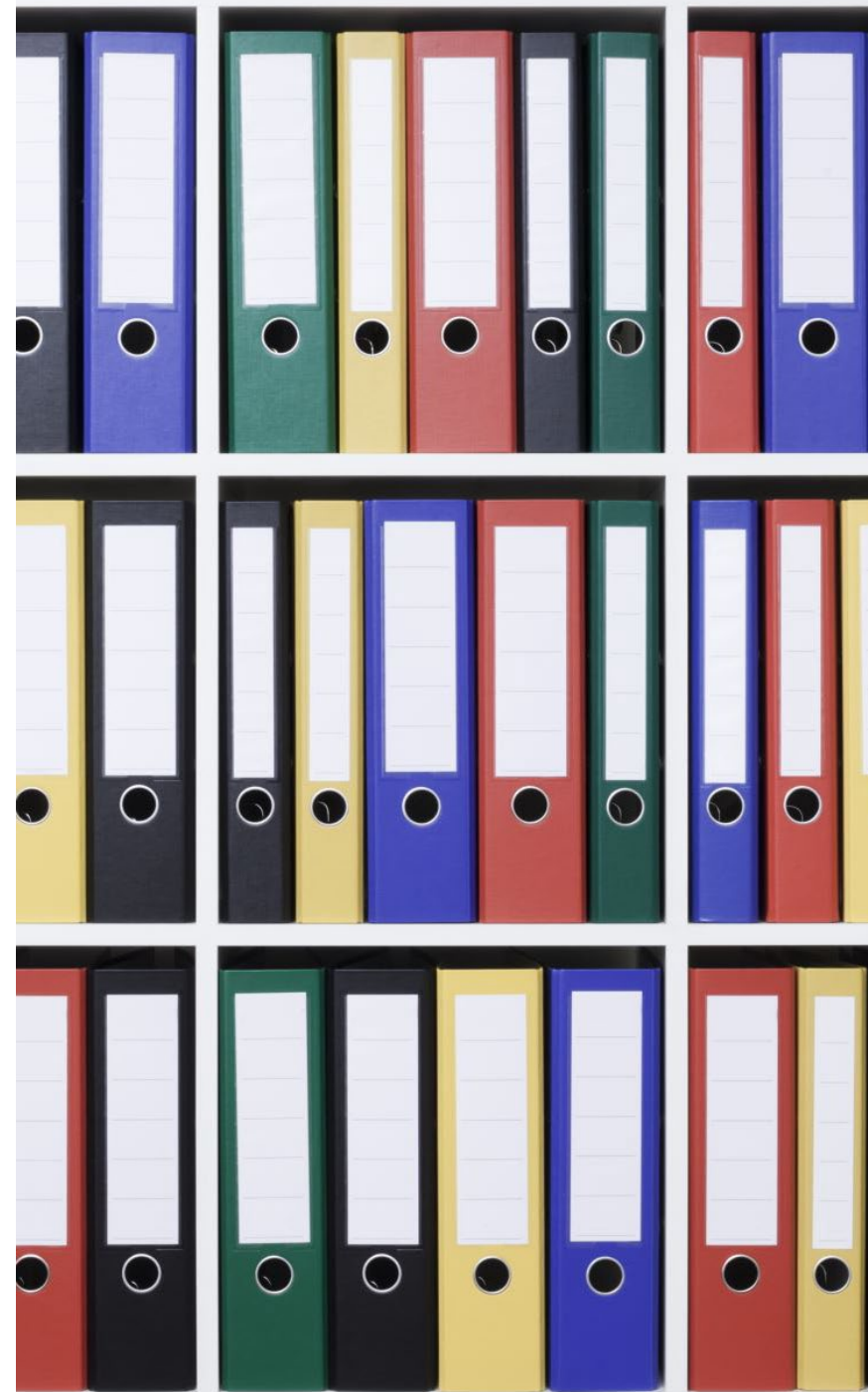


Improved response time – When plans, contacts, and resources are well-documented, people can act quickly and confidently during an emergency.

Documentation

- Legal and safety compliance – Proper documentation can demonstrate that your organization took reasonable safety precautions, which can be important for liability and insurance purposes.

- Review and improvement – Written records allow you to evaluate how well the plan worked after each winter season and make updates based on lessons learned.



Restoration

1. Reporting Injuries

Immediately report any injury to the appropriate person.

Make sure your staff know who that individual is.

Report all incidents to www.archbalt.org/risk. If a slip and fall report as a general liability incident If an injury to an employee report as a workers compensation incident. **2.**

2. Providing First Aid

Administer prompt first aid **only if it is safe to do so.**

Contact emergency services if the injury requires medical attention.

3. Documenting and Investigating Incidents

Record details of all incidents, including time, location, and individuals involved.

Investigate root causes to prevent recurrence.

Restoration

After each storm, inspect the building for:

- Leaks or water intrusion
- Ice damage
- Frozen or burst pipes

Documentation and Reporting

- Take photographs of any damage.
- Maintain written records for insurance claims and future reference.

Review and Continuous Improvement

- Conduct a debrief with staff after restoration activities.
- Identify lessons learned and update procedures to improve the response to future storms.

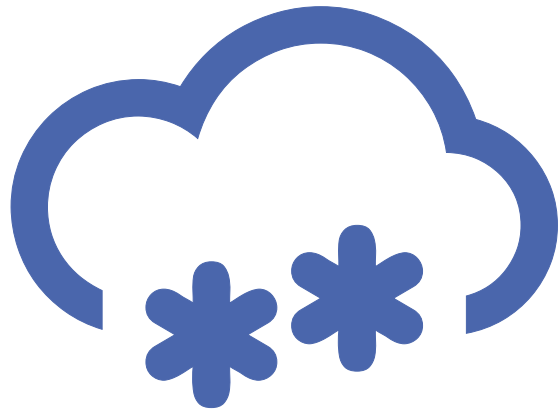
Reporting of Claims

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.archbalt.org/office-of-risk-management/>. The browser's address bar also shows a tab for 'Risk Management Office | A...' and another for 'riskassurance.com'. The website's header includes the Archdiocese of Baltimore logo and a navigation menu with links: ABOUT US, PARISHES, SCHOOLS, MINISTRIES, VOCATIONS, and GIVING. A search bar is located on the right side of the header.

The main content area is titled 'RISK MANAGEMENT' and features a sidebar with the following links: Boilers, Boiler Maintenance Program, Chubb Inspectors, Claims, Report a Claim, and Facility Use. The 'Report a Claim' link is highlighted. To the right of the sidebar, the text reads: 'Risk Management, 320 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201, Phone: 410-547-5424, Fax: 410-547-3153, Email'. A blue button labeled 'REPORT A CLAIM' is positioned to the right of this text.

Below the sidebar, the 'Our Staff' section lists the following personnel: Tom Alban, Director, Risk Management 410-547-5424; Cathy O'Brien, Risk Management Associate 443-263-1950; and Diana Appel, Administrative Assistant 410-547-5529.

The Windows taskbar at the bottom of the screen shows the search bar with the text 'Type here to search' and a series of application icons including Edge, Mail, Outlook, File Explorer, Store, Excel, Chrome, Word, and PowerPoint. The system tray on the right indicates the time as 6:33 PM on 8/27/2019.



A winter storm warning is issued for your area, expected to bring a foot of snow and subzero temperature.

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- How do you activate your emergency response plan?
 - Who is responsible for monitoring weather alerts and communicating with staff
 - What is your backup plan if the heating system fails during the storm?

Questions, Discussions, Recommendations

