

Snow Removal Safety

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PREPARING FOR WINTER WEATHER

The Winter season brings on new challenges for Gardens related to the weather. Snowfall and wet weather create need for thoughtful consideration of clearing walkways and pathways. It is important to consider and identify high traffic areas for visitors and staff and plan your maintenance strategy accordingly; whether that is sanding, plowing or shoveling. If you have holiday events, even more so. Furthermore, evening events that occur after dark require strategic lighting and its own specific maintenance plan as the duty of care is elevated given the challenges in seeing at night.

The seasonal transition may require you to start periodically shoveling snow. Although this task is necessary to help clear pathways and prevent ice buildup, shoveling snow comes with serious safety risks.

After all, repeated shoveling requires significant physical exertion, which—when paired with the frigid outdoor elements—can take a dangerous toll on your body. The most common complications that can accompany shoveling snow include sprains and strains, hypothermia, frostbite and even cardiac arrest.

That is why it is crucial to utilize proper precautions while you shovel snow. Consider these best practices:

- Always check the weather before working outdoors to properly prepare yourself. Try to limit your time shoveling if weather conditions are extremely cold, wet or windy.
- Make sure you dress appropriately for the task at hand. Wear several loose layers of clothing, a warm hat that fully covers your head and ears, mittens (rather than gloves) and thick socks that will keep your feet dry.
- Take a few minutes to stretch before you begin shoveling to better prepare your body for the physical demands of the task.
- Try to push the snow instead of lifting it. If you must lift snow while shoveling, use a smaller shovel or only partially fill your shovel with snow to avoid lifting too much at a time. In addition, remember to lift with your legs rather than your back.
- Pay attention to how you feel while you shovel—never work to the point of exhaustion. If you begin to feel overly fatigued, stop shoveling and inform your supervisor.
- When handling large amounts of snow, consider utilizing a snowblower rather than a shovel to avoid the extra labor. However, make sure you are properly trained to do so. Always consult your supervisor before making any equipment changes.

Keeping pathways clear is critical for a safe visitor experience and important to keep yourself safe as well during winter conditions.

We wish you all a happy, healthy and safe Holiday Season.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please call a member of the BHS Insurance Public Garden team at (800) 350-7676.

