

WHEN TO SHOVEL

As a general rule, property owners can wait a “reasonable time” until after it stops snowing to clear a walking surface from ice and snow. “Reasonable time” can be defined by a factor of various circumstances:

- **Activity:** If an organization is open for service or other activities, the expectation is that it clears ice and snow from parking lots, walkways and steps as soon as possible after the snow has stopped. This could require clearing snow during a storm if heavy foot traffic in and out of a building is anticipated during the actual storm event.
- **Time of day:** The reasonable time span to clear snow is usually hours; not days. Once the sun has risen and the snow has stopped, walking surfaces should be cleared as soon as possible.
- **Amount of snow:** Even light snow can lead to serious accidents, but the more snow there is, the more important it is to remove snow quickly. If heavy snow is expected, it may be prudent to remove snow several times during the storm to reduce back strains that can be caused by removing heavy snow.
- **Local ordinance:** Some municipal governments have laws indicating what they consider reasonable. Also, most cities have the authority to levy fines for not shoveling public sidewalks after a snowstorm. Check with local authorities to learn about requirements in your area.

HOW MUCH TO SHOVEL

As a best practice, remove snow, slush and ice from the full-paved width of a sidewalk or at least a minimum path of 42 inches. Paths that are at least 42-inches wide will likely allow people to easily walk past one another and use wheelchairs or baby strollers without problems. Be sure to keep access to ADA ramps and fire hydrants cleaned of ice and snow, too.

SALTING AND SANDING

Always shovel, snow blow or plow first, especially if the pavement temperature is 32 degrees F or colder. Spread sand and ice melt on icy patches to make sidewalks, steps and parking lots safer for pedestrians. Also consider salting or sanding walking surfaces before ice forms. This can make future attempts at ice removal much easier. Not all ice melting products are created equal. Various de-icers perform differently at different temperature ranges. Consult the manufacturer’s suggested rate of application. Some ice melting products can damage concrete, corrode metals over time and harm nearby grass and plants. Learn more about salt types by viewing this [Ice-Melt Comparison Chart](#).

The information contained in these materials is intended solely to provide general guidance on topics that may be of interest to you. While we have made reasonable efforts to present accurate and reliable information, Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. (a stock insurer)¹ and its affiliates expressly disclaim all liability for any errors or omissions, or for any actions you take or fail to take based on these materials. Links to any external websites provided in these materials are not maintained by Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. or its affiliates. Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. and its affiliates are not responsible for and do not in any way approve or endorse the content or accuracy of such sites. The information provided in these materials may not apply to your particular facts or circumstances; therefore, you should seek professional advice prior to relying on any information that may be found herein. © 2020 Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I.. All Rights Reserved.

¹Church Mutual is a stock insurer whose policyholders are members of the parent mutual holding company formed on 1/1/20. S.I. = a stock insurer.