



Snow Safety — Shoveling

The Next Three Seconds Protects Your Life, Your Loved Ones, Your Livelihood®

The N3L3 philosophy:

our approach to protecting workers from fatal and life-changing events.

Eastern Alliance is here to help. To learn more about Eastern's N3L3 program and access other safety resources, sign in and visit the Safety Tools on www.easternalliance.com, or contact your Risk Management Consultant for assistance

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The following tips can help you get a "handle" on safe shoveling:

- Consider equipment alternatives to manual shoveling.
- Prior to winter, identify the areas that need to be shoveled during snow fall.
- Designate what employee will be tasked with shoveling. Make sure snow removal is provided in the job description and provided to the pre-hire physician to determine fitness for duty.
- Take it slow! Ensure scheduling provides ample time to complete the task. Consider work-rest cycles or job rotation. Shoveling (like lifting weights) can raise your heart rate and blood pressure dramatically, so *pace yourself*. Be sure to stretch out and warm up before taking on the task
- When possible, try to shovel fresh snow. Freshly fallen, powdery snow is easier to shovel than the wet, packed-down variety. Pay attention to the weather reports and create a schedule that helps accomplish the removal of fresh snow.
- Provide smaller shovels to prevent overexertion from a large load.
- Straight handled shovels are best used when lifting/scooping snow. This type of shovel should be considered in heavy and/or deep snows.
- Curved handled (ergonomic) shovels are meant to push snow, rather than lift/scoop snow. The curved nature of the handle is designed to reduce stress on the lower back when pushed, but if used for lifting, increases the stress as compared to a straight handed shovel. This type of shovel should be considered if snow is light and not very deep.
- Snow pushers resemble a snow plow blade and are not meant for lifting/scooping snow because of their size. If used where expansion joints in the surface are present (e.g., concrete walks or driveways) they should be run across the surface at a slight angle to help it travel more smoothly and reduce the risk of the blade dropping into the small gaps that can cause it to stop abruptly giving the operator an unexpected jolt.
- Educate employees who will be performing shoveling work on the following:
 - Push the snow as you shovel. It's easier on your back than lifting the snow out of the way
 - Don't pick up too much at once.
 - Lift with your legs bent, not your back. Keep your back straight. By bending and "sitting" into the movement, you'll keep your spine upright and less stressed. Your shoulders, torso and thighs can do the work for you.
 - Do not work to the point of exhaustion. If you run out of breath, take a break. If you feel tightness in your chest, stop immediately.
 - Dress warmly and in layers. Remember that extremities, such as the nose, ears, hands and feet, need extra attention during winter's cold. Wear a turtleneck sweater, cap, scarf, face protection, mittens, wool socks and waterproof boots.

Remember, if you're uncomfortable with the work, aren't quite sure what you're doing, need additional education on the topic, or need additional resources (time, materials, tools, equipment, training, PPE, etc.) to complete the job in a safe manner, communicate this with your supervisor, IMMEDIATELY!