

Safe Work Procedure: Safe Shoveling

Department/Area:	Approved by:	Date Created:	Review/Revision Date:
Maintenance/Custodial	Workplace Safety and Health Committee	Nov.15, 2023	Annually

Potential Hazard	Risk level
Awkward/sustained postures - reach, twisting	High
Forceful exertions - lifting, pushing loaded shovel	High
Repetitive movements - shoveling is repetitive	High
Compression - hitting foot onto shovel to dig	Medium
Surfaces causing falls - ice, snow, rough ground	Medium
Extreme heat/cold - weather conditions, clothes	Medium

Risk control devices, personal protective equipment, and other safety considerations	Training/Reference info
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear appropriate footwear and clothing for the weather conditions Appropriate shovel helps reduce effort Curved (ergonomic) shaft shovels are designed to reduce bending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Injury prevention orientation

Note: Common signs and symptoms of a musculoskeletal injury (MSI) can include pain, burning, swelling, stiffness, numbness/tingling, and/or loss of movement or strength in a body part. Report these to your supervisor.

The direct supervisor must ensure that employees who report to him/her are trained and follow this safe work procedure.

Steps to complete this task safely:

- Choose an appropriate shovel for the job.
- Try to keep your physical exertion to a moderate level. Push or shovel only a reasonable amount at once. If you feel you have to hold your breath when lifting, you are probably lifting too much.
- When shoveling snow, try to clear it before it gets packed down. Attempt to push the snow with a wide shovel or scoop shovel to reduce repetitive bending and lifting.
- Try to use safe body mechanics. For shoveling, these include:
 - a wide stance, a wide grip on the shovel, and keeping your back straight and upright.
 - bending the knees and hips when lifting rather than rounding your back forward.
 - taking small steps to turn to avoid twisting your back, especially when carrying loads.
- Don't try to throw snow or other materials great distances. Forcefully twisting with a load greatly increases the stress on your back and shoulders.**

- Pace yourself. Take frequent micro-breaks to stretch your back if you are shoveling for long periods.
- Alternate your hands periodically to break up the same movement.
- Once the snow has been cleared, use a small container and sprinkle sand or de-icing agent on the area if appropriate.