

S₂ Partnership Ltd
Intelligent Risk Management

HEALTH & SAFETY BRIEFING NOTE

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WINTER

INTRODUCTION

The S₂ Partnership has developed some simple, practicable and effective advice to assist you in dealing with seasonal changes.

The return of the colder months naturally brings hazards. However, these can be avoided with effective controls.

Measures that aim to control seasonal and climatic conditions should be detailed within your risk assessments. This will allow you to suitably reduce the risk, to a reasonable level.



Snow & Ice Assess the risk. Areas of high pedestrian traffic are particularly prone to the effects of snow and ice. These areas include:

- Building entrances
- Car parks
- Pedestrian walkways
- Sloped areas
- Areas within shade.

Effective **Salt & Gritting** in these areas can significantly reduce the risk of trips or slips, by actively reducing surface ice. Be mindful of falling objects such as icicles and heavy snowfall hanging over pavements. Steps should be taken to remove these where possible.

Slippery Surfaces The most effective control you can implement here is **preventing slippery surfaces**. The accumulation of leaves, moss and other vegetation on pathways can increase the risk of slips. Regular inspection and clearance can reduce the build-up and accumulation of these.

Inside buildings, a simple slip test can help review the slip resistance of flooring and ascertain what additional measures should be taken to prevent slip accidents. Where this is not possible, you should warn pedestrians and drivers of any such hazards. Redirect them to less slippery walkways and separate off existing ones using signage and / or barriers.

Freezing Water Cold weather can cause water in pipes and drains to freeze, causing blockages. **Take preventative action**. Areas particularly susceptible could be:

- Vacant units where background heating is not maintained.
- External / exposed water pipes.

Water systems should be drained down to prevent freezing and bursting. Water pipes exposed to external temperatures should be adequately lagged or fitted with trace heating.

Commercial Waste Containers An increased number of deaths have occurred due to people sleeping in waste containers during cold conditions. Such persons can be killed through being accidentally crushed by waste collection. This risk can be reduced by storing containers in a secure location, locking them, and checking for signs of activity.

Low Light Even in the daytime, low lighting conditions can present an increased safety and security risk. Confirm that lighting is functional and sufficient for those on site. Decide if higher risk activities can be done during the best light hours.

Contractor Management This is important at all times of the year, but during winter, extra care and attention should be taken if contractors are carrying out works externally. Risk assessments and method statements provided by contractors must be reviewed to ensure they encompass seasonal risks.

Roof Safety Windspeeds are likely to increase, which will be a factor associated with any external working. Carry out an assessment before work starts and remember to include:

- Loose debris on roof / facades
- Condition of structures on roofs (such as tank rooms), as well as cladding systems
- Trees and signage
- Guttering

Working on roof areas is a high-risk activity, especially during the winter months. Therefore, a roof safety inspection must first be carried out to assess the associated hazards and risks. All activities should be carried out under a permit to work where there is no edge protection and assessment of these areas must include any fragile surfaces. Further guidance on roof work can be found in several HSE documents including:

- INDG284 - Working on Roofs
- HSG33 - Health and Safety in Roof Work
- WAHR2005 - Work at Height Regulations

Winter Cooling Tower Shutdown The demand for cooling in many buildings is highly reduced during winter. Cooling towers can remain idle, increasing the risk of stagnation and microbiological growth. Shutting down cooling towers during the winter months will save significant water, energy, and chemical costs.

Following a suitable water treatment program and operating procedures will ensure that your cooling tower is shut down correctly. This will help prevent the formation of iron chips and biofilm, protecting it over the winter and facilitating a trouble-free start-up ready for spring.


Contact us for a sample water treatment program shutdown procedure. All cooling towers differ, so it is advisable to seek professional help before undertaking any works relating to cooling tower systems.

If you would like expert guidance or support on any of the issues detailed above, please contact our specialist teams – we're always happy to help.

How can we help?

The S₂ Partnership has a dedicated team of health & safety, ESG and fire experts who can provide fire risk assessments, training, guidance, and safety management systems to a range of organisations to meet legal obligations. S₂ keeps abreast of the latest changes in regulations and works with clients to develop robust safety solutions, providing just the right support to each individual business to ensure outstanding and potential risk actions are mitigated.

This information is of a general nature and is not intended as a substitute for professional consultation and advice on a particular matter nor is it intended to supersede internal company policies or guidance. For professional advice on a particular matter, please contact hello@s2partnership.co.uk, we'd be happy to assist. Under no circumstances will the S₂ Partnership Ltd be liable for any damages arising from the use of or reliance on this general information. The S₂ Partnership, 14-18 Avenue Business Park, Elsworth, Cambridge, CB23 4EY V202003 © S₂ Partnership Ltd. All rights reserved.



We hope you find the information contained in this document helpful.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further guidance or support.

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