



# Understand Your Sidewalk Snow Removal Obligations

Removing ice and snow from sidewalks may not be your favorite task, but it's essential to do. Neglecting to properly clear sidewalks may expose you to liability for slip and fall accidents.

Most communities have ordinances requiring property owners to remove snow and ice from sidewalks, walkways, entryways, and adjacent parking lots within a specific time frame, often within 24 hours after snowfall stops.

Anyone who leases their premises may have similar provisions written into the lease contract. So, whether you own your business or lease the location, you likely have an obligation to shovel snow and remove ice from the public pathways surrounding your premises. You may also be required to use materials such as sand, salt or sawdust on icy areas and to keep the sidewalks clear throughout the day as foot traffic tracks snow. **Therefore, it is crucial for you to understand PRECISELY what your municipality and/or lease contract requires to be prepared when snow and ice accumulate. If you're a landlord and expect your tenant to maintain walkways, ensuring they are aware of local snow and ice maintenance laws is equally important.**

Failure to keep sidewalks clear after snowfall can have significant financial consequences. This includes costly personal injury claims, potential increases in annual insurance premiums and fines or citations issued by your municipality. These fines can accumulate daily as separate violations, and property owners may be billed for snow and ice removal by the city.

To avoid costly fines and slip and fall claims, take the time to familiarize yourself with snow removal laws in your area. Visit your city or municipality's website or contact the local municipality office for information. This proactive approach is not just about compliance; it also makes good business sense.



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