

Danger lies just outside your door



Watch your step

Maintain 3 points of contact

Police Slipping on Ice - Shift Briefing

Every year police departments in New Jersey experience significant losses from police officers slipping on ice or snow, often when getting out of their patrol vehicles. In 2011, The JIF / MEL system experienced over 100 police officer injuries from slips on ice, totaling over \$1.7M. Responses increase during inclement weather, which means the number of opportunities for a slip-trip and fall also increases. A fall which leads to a back injury can cause a lifetime of pain and limitations. Here are some tips to minimize slip-trip and fall injuries:

- **Use 3-Points of Contact when exiting / entering vehicles**

Much like climbing a ladder, officers should face the vehicle and hold on with both hands as stepping into or out of the vehicle. Only let go of the vehicle when both feet are firmly on the ground or in the vehicle.

- **Be aware when positioning vehicles on arrival**

Officers have many factors to consider as they approach a scene.

On non-emergency incidents, officers can take a few seconds to best position and park their vehicles. Note the location of potholes, loose surfaces, curbs, and other features that could cause you to lose your footing when exiting the vehicle. Available lighting is another consideration.

On motor vehicle stops, use the PA if necessary to direct the other vehicle to a safe location.

Emergency incidents such as motor vehicle crashes present additional challenges. Officers must make a quick evaluation of the scene as they approach and consider traffic, downed wires, etc. During cold weather, and to the extent possible, officers must also consider icy patches, snow, etc. in your size-up. You can not help if you are injured. Your safety has to be the initial priority and is worth a second or two of consideration as you arrive.

- **Shoe / boot selection during winter months**

Officers may wish to invest in a second pair of boots especially designed for icy conditions. Select a softer plastic sole with an aggressive lug pattern for better traction.

Whether you invest in a second pair or not, if your boots' soles are worn, replace them.

- **Have a plan for the police station lot and walkways**

Work with the local Public Works to make sure the parking lots and sidewalks used by officers are the top priority. Supply salt at the entrances and throughout the lot during winter months. Supervisors and officers must be willing to take immediate actions, such as spreading salt or shoveling sidewalks, to correct unsafe conditions for the officers before Public Works or similar agencies can arrive to take more comprehensive actions.