Shoveling Snow Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. One way to help keep your balance when walking on slippery surfaces is to keep your hands out of your pockets.
2. Two things to avoid before shoveling snow are caffeine and nicotine, because they increase your heart rate and may cause your blood vessels to constrict, thereby increasing your risk for a heart attack.
3. Up to 10 percent of your body heat can be lost through your head, so it’s important to wear a hat in cold outdoor working conditions. (LiveScience.com)
4. It takes five to seven days to become acclimatized to working outdoors in cold conditions.
5. Carbon monoxide accumulation in buildings is a major health hazard for workers in the winter months. Six pieces of equipment that can cause carbon monoxide poisoning if operated indoors without adequate ventilation are gasoline/propane powered forklifts, gas appliances and fireplaces, cars or trucks, welding equipment, gasoline-powered compressors and pumps, and fuel-powered heaters.
6. If you are driving on ice-covered roads, your stopping distances will be anywhere from three to 12 times longer than if you were braking on a dry road. (Health and Safety Ontario)

STATS

- Mostly men got injured in shoveling incidents – about two-thirds of cases (67.5 percent).
- Older adults (55 years and older) accounted for about 22 percent of the (mostly) driveway mishaps.
- Children younger than 18 get hurt, too, making up about 15 percent of shoveling accidents.
- The most common injury? Strains, sprains, contusions, abrasions. These soft-tissue injuries (to muscles, tendons

or ligaments) accounted for 54.7 percent of all injuries.

- People also tend to hurt their lower backs (hence the need to lift with your legs). Injuries to the lower back accounted for 34.3 percent of hospital admissions.
- In 20 percent of emergencies, people slipped and fell. In 15 percent, they were struck by a shovel. Cardiac-related ER visits, such as for heart attacks, accounted for 6.7 percent of cases.
- For snowfalls of more than eight inches, there was a 16% increase in hospital admissions compared to days with no snow.
- The deeper the snow, the more men died of heart attacks. A 34% increase was observed the day after an eight-inch snowfall, and higher rates were noted when even more snow fell.
- Duration of snowfall. The longer it snowed, the higher the rates of heart attack and related deaths among men.