

# VOLTS NEWSLETTER

Valuing Our Lives Through Safety

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## Hazardous Winter Conditions—Casey Draper

Although recent weather patterns may have us thinking that Old Man Winter and his nasty effects have missed us, the reality of living in Central Utah is that we have several months of cold, windy, and potentially wet and snowy conditions in our future. While these conditions are common to everyone, it's important to have a strong safety culture that extends through the season. Key elements of a strong safety culture can be used to keep yourself and others safe during winter weather. The VOLTS process is part of the safety culture and helps employees with Hazard Identification, Hazard Mitigation, and Prevention. One of the most effective prevention techniques is to have a "safety is everyone's responsibility" attitude.

### Slip and Fall Hazards

Even though there is no shortage of information or recommendations that can help prevent slips and falls during winter conditions, we can all remember a time when we unexpectedly had our feet go out from under us. Depending on the situation, many factors can contribute to whether or not we keep ourselves upright or end up on our backsides. This poses a simple question...Have you ever thought about the potential for Significant Injury or Fatality from falling with force or falling backwards and hitting your head? While ice, snow, slush, mud, and wet surfaces can cause slips and falls, a few variables may cause that slip or fall to cost



you a few weeks off work. And a slip or fall from height or with some force could cost you your life.

Some great examples of hazard identification and mitigation have come from observations performed by the FEO Group where the hazards of climbing the rungs of an access ladder to a heavy equipment cab in icy or muddy conditions has been discussed. Their solutions to the exposure of falling from height include:

- ◆ Cleaning off the soles of your boots
- ◆ Cleaning the buildup of mud and ice from the rungs of ladders
- ◆ Keeping the access areas and work platforms as clean as possible
- ◆ Maintaining three-points-of-contact while ascending and

descending the heavy equipment

### Winter Driving Hazards

The winter season poses some unfavorable driving conditions and all we want is the ability to get from point A to point B with no problems. Unfortunately, Old Man Winter has no regard for our concerns. Though the cold winter months don't always offer stress-free driving, getting from A to B on wintry roads isn't an impossible feat. It's important to maintain good driving habits and stay aware of your surroundings to help navigate the hazards of winter driving. Listed below are some hazard prevention tactics that may prove beneficial while driving on plant site or during your everyday commute.

## Hazardous Winter Conditions—Casey Draper (cont.)

- Lack of Visibility—a fogged or dirty windshield can impair your vision behind the wheel. Make sure your windshield is defrosted and cleaned from winter grime to prevent obstructed views.
- Braking and Acceleration—go easy on the pedals during winter conditions. The roads may be slick and unsafe for hard braking or quick accelerations.
- Overconfidence in Severe Winter Conditions—the biggest threat on the road may be the driver! Driving in winter months does not provide optimal driving conditions, but don't magnify the hazards with overconfidence.



- When heating an enclosed space, use an indirect-fired heater that vents the combustion gas effectively. Avoid the use of unvented gas-burning appliances, heaters, stoves, and fireplaces.
- Make sure the area is well ventilated. If necessary, use a door, window, or fan to bring in fresh air.
- Using CO detectors at home to alert you of dangerous CO levels is effective, but they are not intended to be the primary way to prevent CO poisoning.

### What's Your Why?

The benefits of using elements found within the VOLTS process—such as providing success and guidance feedback and using “The Three Level Technique” to identify exposures—are core elements that help all of us return home safely to our families. With the holiday season upon us, ask yourself...*What's Your Why?*

### Additional Winter Hazards

Cold temperatures and icy conditions that are often part of Utah winters can cause many hazards at home and the workplace. Although the list of winter hazards could be infinitely long, Carbon Monoxide (CO) exposure may be a winter-related problem we encounter frequently without even thinking about it. According to the CDC (2008), CO poisoning is highest during cold weather when people use gas furnaces and heaters.

### References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] (2008), *Carbon Monoxide Poisoning*. <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/publications/spotlights/cospotlight.htm>



### We want to hear from you!

The VOLTS Steering Committee is looking for some **safety-related stories or experiences**. Have you or someone you know had an accident or experience that you're willing to share in an upcoming VOLTS newsletter? If so, talk to Casey Draper or one of the VOLTS Steering Committee members.

Have you ever thought of becoming more involved with the VOLTS process? The VOLTS Steering Committee needs more committee members and we want your insight and input!

### Roles and Responsibilities for a VOLTS Steering Committee Member:

- Lead by example
- Protect the integrity and quality of all facets of the VOLTS process
- Help train new observers and coach existing observers; help develop and manage the observation strategy
- Perform observations and provide individual and group feedback
- Give positive feedback as well as guidance feedback tactfully and respectfully to employees to reduce the risk of exposure and incident involvement

*What's your why?*

Do an observation today!

