



City of Madison Fire Department

News Release

Date: December 17, 2008

Released By: Lori Wirth – Public Information Officer
Office: (608) 266-5947 Cell: (608) 575-4943

Snow-Covered Ice Results in Increased Falls

Yesterday's snowfall masked slippery spots on streets and sidewalks that resulted in an unusual number of emergency calls for falls.

City of Madison firefighters and paramedics responded to more than a dozen falls yesterday from 1-6 p.m.

Not all of the falls caused serious injury, but back injuries and broken bones were noted in several cases.

The City of Madison Fire Department reminds residents:

- Falls are a leading cause of injury in Wisconsin, and a leading cause of death for adults 65 and older.
- Check the traction on your footwear - shoes with better traction will grip the ground better. Dress shoes are often quite slippery. If you are going somewhere, and you want to wear dress shoes, consider wearing a pair of shoes with good traction to your destination. Then change into your dress shoes once you're inside.
- Check sidewalk railings to make sure they're sturdy. Could they catch you if you slipped?
- Keep your salt and shovel in the house – if you have to walk through the snow to get to your garage where the salt and shovel are, you've defeated their purpose.
- Carry a cell phone – even if used rarely, it can bring peace of mind when you are going out alone.
- **Ask for help.** If you are walking out of a restaurant and the parking lot has turned in to an ice rink while you were eating, see if you can find a steady arm to guide you. This could be a friend you came with, an employee of the restaurant, or a random passerby.
- **Slow down.** When you're late, you end up hurrying and sometimes pushing the limits of what your balance can handle.
- Strengthen your legs. If you slip, strong leg muscles can help catch you before you hit the ground. Exercise regularly. At home you can walk up and down the stairs or practice getting up out of a chair ten times in a row. Tai chi is another gentle activity that can improve balance.
- **Friends and neighbors can assist** by offered to retrieve mail or pick up groceries for those with limited mobility.

--END--