

Environmental Health and Safety

Traction Device Safety and Use Guide

Purpose

To reduce weather related slips and falls, Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) has a limited number of footwear traction devices free of charge to University of Idaho employees on a first come, first served basis. U of I faculty, staff and students may also purchase traction pullovers locally from several vendors in a variety of styles and sizes. Traction pullovers may be purchased by departments for use on-the-job directly from UI Facilities Shop Stores. To order from Shop Stores, or for additional information, please call (208) 885-7555.

Surface Use

- Wear traction devices on **appropriate winter footwear** – closed toe boots/shoes.
- Use traction devices **only** on **¼ inch or more of packed snow or ice**.
- **Do not use** on bare concrete, tile, wood, carpet, or thin frost, as this significantly increases slip risk.

Proper Fit

- Verify correct **toe placement** before walking:
 - The **tip of your boot must sit between the two forward rubber straps**, not on top of them, to prevent damage to the rubber toe cradle.
- Ensure the device is seated with **full, even tension** around the entire boot.
 - A loose side can cause the device to roll or shift underfoot.

Pre-Use Check

- **Inspect** the device before each use for torn rubber, bent spikes, or any loose or damaged components.
 - Do not use the device if any defects are found.
- Perform a brief **step test** on safe, stable ground to confirm the spikes are aligned and secure.

Walking and Movement

- **Do not wear traction devices indoors** at any time; they can damage flooring and significantly increase slip hazards.
- Avoid walking on **metal surfaces, painted surfaces, or grates**, as spikes may skid, catch, or bend.
- Stay alert during **surface transitions**:
 - Transitioning from ice → concrete → carpet? **Remove** the traction devices before stepping off the icy area.
 - Transitioning from ice → concrete → ice (while outdoors)? **Keep** the traction devices on.
- Maintain a **short, steady stride**.
 - Long steps reduce stability.
 - **Do not run** while wearing traction devices.



Environmental Health and Safety

Traction Device Safety and Use Guide

Care and Storage

- Clean devices after each use and allow them to dry.
- Store in a **gallon Ziploc® bag** to extend their lifespan.

Issuance and Return Policy

- Traction devices are issued for your use **while employed by the University of Idaho**.
- If you **leave the university**, please return the devices to EHS prior to your last day.
- If you **transfer departments within the university**, you may retain and continue using your issued pair.

Replacement and Reporting

- Report any **damaged or unsafe traction devices** to EHS.
- EHS will issue a replacement pair but we need the original pair before the swap can be completed.

Additional Tips for Winter Walking

- Walk like a penguin - keep your stride wide and short. Align your core to keep your center of gravity low and centered over your hips and feet.
- Wear appropriate footwear for the weather and conditions. Winter boots with traction is a good place to start and also help keep your feet warm and dry.
- Add additional traction by using devices that slip over your footwear. EHS has free devices for faculty and staff.
- Stay on cleared and maintained walkways. Around campus, walk on sidewalks that are heated by the steam tunnels. These paths stay clear through most weather conditions.
- Wipe your feet when entering buildings and remove traction devices. Those first few steps into the building may be slippery from tracked snow and water.
- Use handrails when going up and down stairs.
- Don't multi-task while walking - put the phone away and look where you are going.
- Help your fellow Vandals by scattering sand from the supplied buckets whenever needed, especially if you are the first to arrive in the morning or if weather changes during the day.

Please report any accidents and injuries through the Accident Report Form. If you notice a safety concern, please submit a mobile-friendly Safety Concern Form. For icy conditions that cannot be addressed with some sand from a sand bucket, contact Facilities at 208-885-6246.

