VFL 2026

Visible Felt Leadership (VFL) visits should focus on observation,conversation and engagement. Periodically, we are sharing discussion topics aligned to current H&S campaigns.



Housekeeping
Keep designated access routes and work areas tidy and free from trip/slip hazards.

WINTER PREPARATION & HOUSKEEPING

KEY INFORMATION

- Winter conditions increase the risk of slips, trips and falls due to snow, ice, black ice, freezing rain, standing water, mud and reduced visibility.
- Access roads, pedestrian routes, walkways, stairs, platforms, and emergency escape routes must be kept clear of snow and ice and safe for use at all times.
- Snow and ice must be removed promptly. Salt, grit or another approved de-icing and anti-slip material must be available in sufficient quantities and positioned near priority areas before freezing conditions occur.
- Take 5 is a key control tool: before starting work or whenever conditions change, always assess the surroundings and surface conditions (snow, ice and black ice).
- Preventing slips, trips and falls (STF) requires walkways to be kept clean and clear, snow to be removed, routes to be treated with salt/sand, and suitable S3 footwear to be worn, with anti-slip overshoes where needed.
- Moving around the site requires full attention: do not use a phone while walking, maintain your balance and use three points of contact.
- Workplaces and work areas must be fully prepared for winter. This includes checking salt/sand supplies, ensuring outdoor lighting is operational, providing insulated hi-vis clothing, and making warm-up areas and hot drinks available to employees.
- Stopping work is the correct and expected response whenever slippery surfaces or severe weather conditions prevent tasks from being carried out safely.

HOW TO ENGAGE EMPLOYEES DURING A VFL

- Walk the site with employees and contractors during actual winter conditions and ask them to identify slippery surfaces and changing hazards.
- Observe parking areas, pedestrian routes, entrances, stairs, ramps, platforms, drainage points and routes between vehicles and workplaces.
- Confirm who monitors weather conditions, who authorises treatment, and who responds when snow falls or surfaces begin to freeze.
- Emphasise the importance of Take 5 and continuous monitoring of slip, trip and fall risks across the site.
- Promote the use of suitable S3 footwear, anti-slip overshoes where conditions require them, insulated hi-vis clothing, and strict use of designated routes only.
- Encourage proactive identification and reporting of icy, hazardous areas and the use of stop-work authority when hazards are present.
- Check that all winter hazards, near misses and STF events are reported promptly and discussed within teams.

QUESTIONS DURING A VFL

- Where are the highest-risk locations for ice, black ice, snow accumulation or refreezing water in this area?
- Are priority walkways, stairs, entrances and emergency exits clear, treated and safe right now?
- Who is responsible for inspecting this area and how is the inspection recorded?
- Is enough salt, grit or approved de-icer available for the next deterioration in weather conditions?
- What is the safe alternative route if this access becomes unsafe?
- Is your footwear suitable for the current surface, and do you need an approved traction aid?
- How do you report and isolate an icy or slippery surface that cannot be corrected immediately?

HAZARD AND CHALLENGE IDENTIFICATION

- Slippery, icy or uncleared walkways, stairs, work platforms and building entrances.
- Limited visibility, early darkness on outdoor routes and inadequate site lighting.
- Distraction (using a phone while moving) and failure to maintain three points of contact.
- Unsuitable safety footwear, failure to use anti-slip overshoes when required, or loose/unfastened footwear.
- Rapid temperature changes (from thawing to freezing) that create hidden ice on surfaces.

REINFORCING GOOD PRACTICES

- Complete a thorough Winter Take 5 assessment at the workplace and whenever weather conditions change.
- Consistently maintain three points of contact on stairs, ladders and platforms, and use designated routes only.
- Use suitable S3 safety footwear, anti-slip overshoes where required, and complete insulated hi-vis clothing.
- Stop work when hazardous conditions arise, actively report icy areas, and share lessons learned from near misses.