Winter storms hazardous for Pennsylvania workers

With the winter season upon us, and a winter storm here this weekend, it is very important for workers in Pennsylvania to understand the risks of working during winter storms. Workers face many hazards during winter storms and cold weather.

Employers are supposed to keep workers safe. That includes protecting workers from the hazards of working during a winter storm. Workers are at risk for being injured or suffering an illness when working in winter storms. Roughly 70 percent of work injuries during winter storms are caused by car accidents, according to the National Weather Service. Another 25 percent are caused by working out in a winter storm.

Due to the serious risks workers face during winter storms in Pennsylvania, it is important for employers and workers to be aware of the different types of winter storm watches and warnings. Since a majority of injuries involve a vehicle, it is important to make sure workers are operating vehicles that are safe and functioning.

During the winter season, it is important to make sure vehicles used by workers have at least half a tank of gas. The brakes, cooling system, electrical system, engine, tires, exhaust system and oil should all be inspected to make sure they are working properly.

Workers should be aware of the hazards of working in a winter storm, which include the following:

- Hypothermia and frost bite
- Dehydration
- Back injuries or heart attacks
- Slip and fall injuries
- Electrocution

- Burns
- Struck by falling objects

With the winter season here, it is very important for workers and employers to be aware of the hazards associated with working outside or when driving. Employers need to take steps to reduce the risk of injuries and make sure workers have proper protective equipment to stay safe while working.

Source: United States Department of Labor, “Winter Storms,” Jan. 2, 2014