

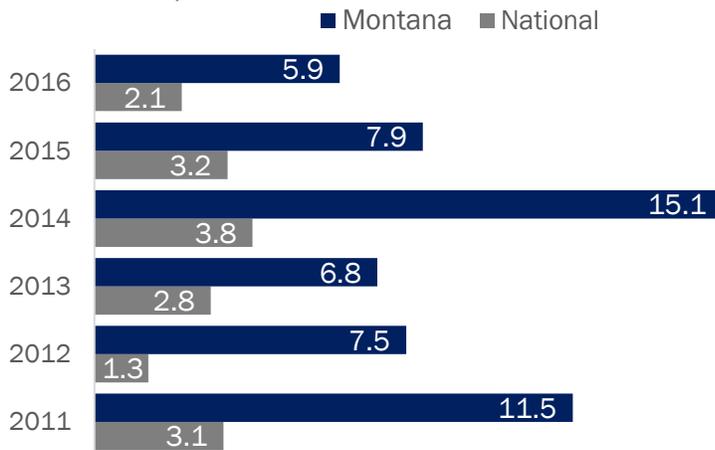
The Season of Slips, Trips, & Falls

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Seasonal hazards and safety challenges are customary for Montana workers, particularly during the winter months, which begins as early as October and ends as late as April for Montanans. Temperatures dropping below 0°F and annual snowfall as high as 60 to 70 inches in central Montana are not unusual. It's no surprise that Montana consistently has an incidence and illness rate higher than the national average for injuries from falls on ice, sleet or snow compared to the national rate (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Falls, Slips, Trips on Ice, Sleet, or Snow - Incidence Rate Per 10,000 FTE



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

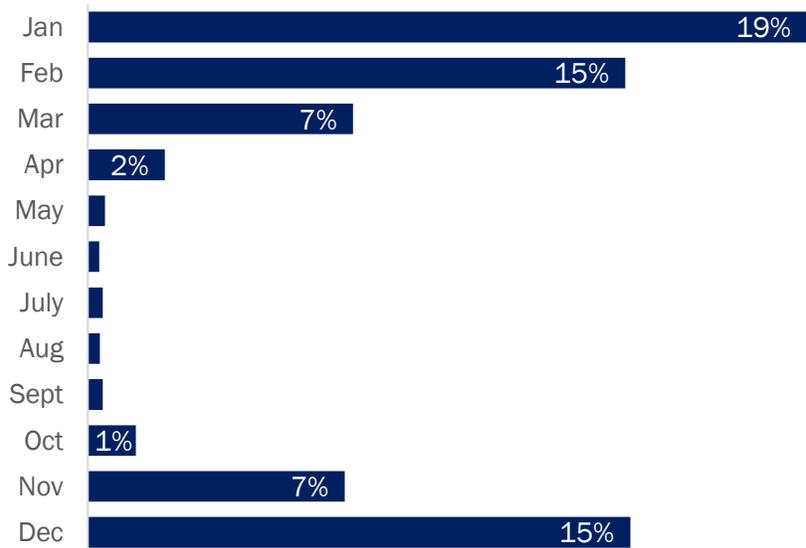
Using Montana workers' compensation data across more than 250,000 claims between accident years 2009 through 2018, injuries caused by slips, trips, and falls comprised approximately 22% of all workers compensations claims and 28% of all wage-loss related claims.

Overall, by month, slips, trips, and falls occur more frequently during the months of December, January, and February (Table 1). The most common slips, trips, and falls are on same level or on ice or snow, and the increase in slips, trips, and falls in winter months from liquid on the floor may be attributed to the tracking in of snow from outside into work premises. Slip, trip, and fall injuries from elevation, from ladder or scaffolding, on stairs, or into openings did not have an increase in injuries during winter months. Additionally, 19% of all reported claims in January included "ice," "icy," or "snow" in the claim's accident description (Figure 2).

Table 1
Types of Slips, Trips, & Falls and Occurring More Frequently in Winter Months

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
All Slips, Trips, & Falls	16%	12%	8%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	8%	12%
On Ice or Snow	34%	22%	10%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	9%	21%
On Same Level	15%	12%	9%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	8%	12%
From Liquid Spills	11%	9%	7%	6%	7%	7%	9%	9%	9%	8%	9%	10%
Other	10%	9%	7%	7%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	10%

Figure 2
Percentage of Claims by Month with Keywords “Ice,” “Icy,” or “Snow” in Accident Description



The most common injuries resulting from a slip, trip, or fall included sprains or strains, bruises or swelling, fractures or dislocation, concussion, or multiple physical injuries and also occurred more frequently during winter months. Combined, these injury types make up approximately 65% of all injuries within the study period. However, within the distribution for each injury type, slips, trips, and falls contribute to between 26% and 51% of each injury type. Concussions, for example, make up 1% of all injuries overall, but 46% of all concussion injuries are the

result of a slip, trip, or fall (Figure 3). Figure 4 illustrates the frequency of the most common slip, trip, or fall injuries by month. For example, 40% of all sprains or strains caused by slips, trips, or falls occurred in December, January, and February, while only 18% of sprains or strains caused by slips, trips, or falls occurred in June, July, and August. This type of inverted distribution was consistent across all of the most common injuries related to slips, trips, and falls.

Figure 3
Most Common Injuries Caused by Slips, Trips, & Falls - Percentage of All Injuries and Distribution of Injury Type Caused by Slip, Trips, & Falls

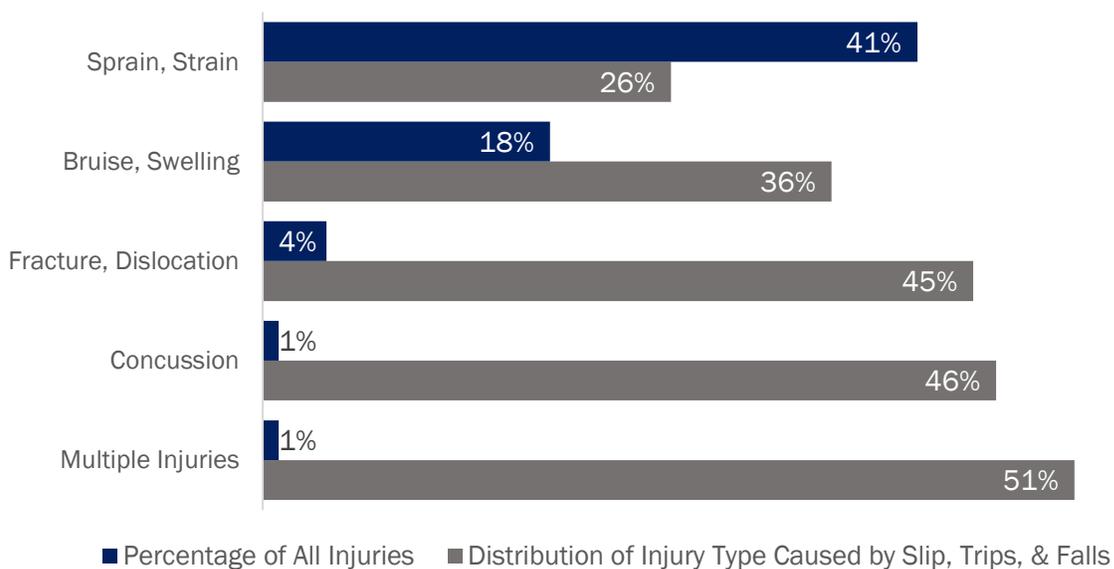
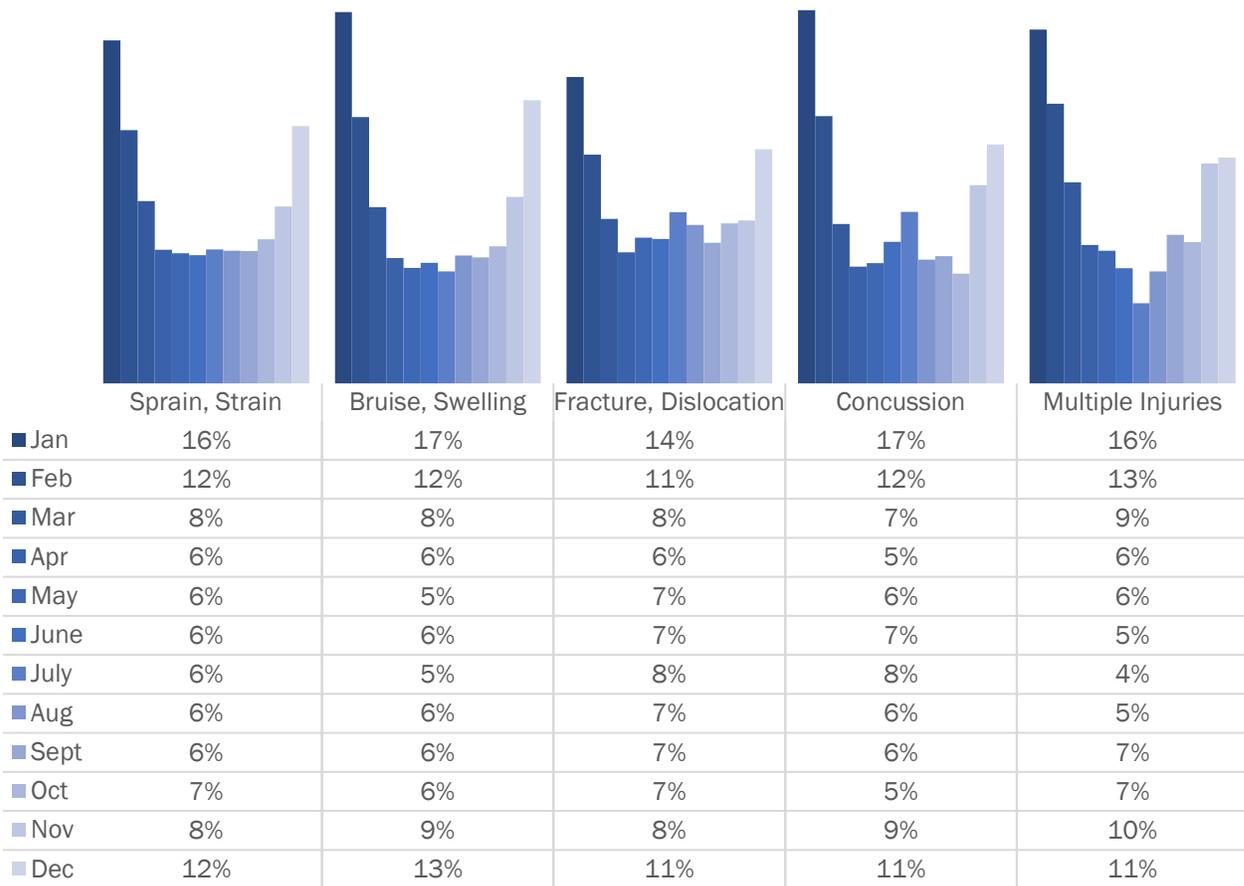


Figure 4

Most Common Injuries Caused by Slips, Trips, & Falls by Month



Resources

For information on how to keep your workplace safer during the season of slip, trips, and falls please visit these websites:

Winter Weather. Plan. Equip. Train. (OSHA) - https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter_weather/

Make Fall Safety a Top Priority (NSC) - <https://www.nsc.org/work-safety/safety-topics/slips-trips-and-falls>

Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls (WSPA) - http://www.wspas.ca/WSPS/media/Site/Resources/Downloads/WSPS_PrevSlipsTripsFalls-2013_Final-LoRes.pdf

Prevent Winter Slips, Trips and Falls (MSF) - <https://safemt.com/prevent-winter-slips-trips-and-falls/>