

 <b>DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY</b>  <b>Facilities Management Shovels and Digging Safe Work Instructions</b>	<i>Policy Sponsor:</i> Assistant Vice President Facilities Management	<i>Approval Date:</i> January 2010
	<i>Responsible Unit:</i> Facilities Management	<i>Revisions:</i>
<b>Service:</b> Environmental Services	<b>Shop:</b> Grounds and Horticulture	
<b>Hazards Identified:</b>  Wet snow or wet earth, lifting too much, slippery surfaces, poor posture and movement, over exertion		
<b>Personal Protective Equipment Required:</b>  Safety boots, hard hat, safety goggles or safety glasses, safety gloves, sunscreen, sun glasses, warm clothing		
<b>Training Required:</b>  Before using this type of equipment employees must be trained by a competent person in its proper use and care.  Employees must be trained in the proper use and maintenance of all required PPE before operating this equipment.		

These safe work practices are to be followed at all times and reviewed as required.

The following information deals with the safe use of earth and snow shovels.

1. Inspect all shovels before each use.
2. Never use a shovel if the handle is cracked.
3. Ensure that shovels used for digging have a sharp edge and that any turned up edges on a snow shovel are filed or cut off to ensure a safe straight edge that won't snag on anything.

4. Make sure shovel length is correct - garden spades should be at or slightly above elbow height and snow shovels, round point or square point shovels should be about chest height.
5. Always use the correct type of shovel for the job you are performing.
6. Do not do shovel work if you have a heart condition.
7. Before starting to shovel, warm up your muscles by doing at least 10 minutes of stretches or light exercises.
8. Use a shovel comfortable for your height and that does not require excessive bending.
9. Place feet wide apart with front foot close to shovel when shoveling.
10. Place weight on front foot and use rear foot to push shovel forward.
11. When digging place point of spade in ground.
12. Place foot on top or step of the shovel and use your leg muscles to push the spade into the ground.
13. Never jump up and down on the step of a shovel.
14. Use the shovel handle and lever and pry the ground or other material free.
15. Only lift a loaded shovel when it is loose or free from the ground.
16. To lift load keep your back straight and bend your legs.
17. Do not bend at the waist, lift by straightening your legs
18. With loaded shovel close to body, shift weight to rear foot.
19. Make sure that there is no one standing in the area where you wish to throw the contents of the shovel.
20. Turn your front foot in the direction that you wish to throw the load to avoid twisting your body and injuring your back.
21. Make two smaller lifts rather than one large heavy lift.
22. Never carry a shovel over your shoulder especially when there are other people in the area or walking behind you.

23. Never throw the material on your shovel over your shoulder.
24. Hand a shovel to another employee handle first.
25. Never leave a shovel on the ground with the blade facing up.
26. Never underestimate the weight of wet soil. If soil is wet lift smaller amounts.
27. Never hold a loaded shovel with your arms extended.

### Snow Shoveling

1. Use mechanized snow removal equipment when ever possible instead of shoveling.
2. Dress using layers of clothing so that as you get warm you can remove one or more layers and put them back on if you start to get cold.
3. Do not allow snow to accumulate before shoveling. Moving smaller amounts more frequently is better than having to lift heavily packed deep snow.
4. Pushing snow is better than lifting.
5. If pushing snow, keep the shovel close to your body.
6. For better pressure / leverage place one hand on the end / handle of the shovel and one hand part way down the handle.
7. Pace yourself for the job. Do not over exert yourself in a short period of time.
8. Do not work outside for extended period during extremely cold conditions.
9. Avoid frost bite by wearing gloves and head and ear protection.
10. Keep your face protected in very cold weather.
11. Do not rub areas with frost bite. Place a hand on the area and warm it up slowly.