Slip and Fall Season Continues Into Spring

It has been a rough winter for many places, especially in the Northeast, South and Midwest. The number of roof collapses in the Midwest and New England attest to the severity of the snowfall.

With the snow beginning to melt due to lengthening days and warmer weather, you might think the risk of slip and fall incidents would diminish. However, the melting caused by the warmer weather and strengthening sunshine leads to runoff, which in turn can then freeze as the sun goes down or when a cold wave rolls in.

In some cases this freeze-up can occur before dark or shortly after sunrise. So while a surface may have been wet as you took a lunchtime stroll, it could be icy by the time you walk out to your car after work in the afternoon.

Sometimes areas shaded from the sun will fail to melt and may freeze before areas exposed to the sun's direct rays. These dangerous patches of ice create chaotic circumstances and sometimes may appear to be wet, hence the term "black ice", or more appropriately, "clear ice".

Ice can form on cold, wet surfaces when the air temperature at eye level is above freezing and given the right conditions. Official temperatures are measured at a height of approximately 6 feet above the ground. Don't dismiss your case just because you may have official observations in hand stating the temperature was above freezing (32 degrees Fahrenheit) around or before the time of the incident.

Remember weather varies by distance, not only in the horizontal from an airport observation site to the incident scene, but also in the vertical from foot to eye level.

The AccuWeather.com Forensics Team has the expertise to reconstruct the weather conditions at the address of the incident, at foot level if need be.

There is no fee for the initial phone consultation. Give the AccuWeather.com Forensics Department a call at 814-235-8626 during normal business hours between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Eastern, Monday through Friday or leave a voice mail in confidence and one of our Forensic Meteorologists will get back to you as soon as possible.