

Slippery When Wet

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During the winter months, we know to keep sidewalks free from snow and ice to prevent pedestrians from slipping on the slick surfaces. However, muddy sidewalks are slip hazards during any season as long as it remains wet. On gardens, lawns, and natural areas, the ground yields under foot thereby absorbing that energy. On unyielding pavement, the foot's downward force gets diverted horizontally and into a slide. The thinnest coat of muck is all it takes.

If you have a muddy sidewalk, please be kind enough to clean it up. Removing the mud is easily done by scraping it up with a flat shovel (e.g., a coal shovel) and using a hose to blast off any residual dirt. A healthy lawn can help prevent future mud from washing in. If excessive tree roots, shade, or other features prevent grass from growing, consider adding a garden to this spot with hardy, soil-retaining native plants geared for those particular conditions.

Thank you!

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Figure 1. On this muddy sidewalk, skid marks (indicated with arrows) show where people slid.