



## Commercial Construction Checklist on Beating the Next Chicago Blizzard

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[Hard Hat Chat](#)

*There is no information about the member*



Englewood Construction is an expert in winter condition commercial construction practices.

The Chicago blizzard of 2011 is a story we'll be talking about for generations. While most businesses, including commercial construction projects, were closed on Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2011, that didn't mean the best Chicago contractors weren't working. After all, shopping center landlords, restaurants and retailers couldn't afford to be closed two days in a row.

Our [commercial maintenance hotline](#) was on high alert. Was a business or [shopping mall roof going to collapse under the weight of too much snow](#) like in New England? Were pipes going to burst or freeze in a restaurant? Would office or shopping center parking lots be cleared in time so delivery trucks, customers and employees could use them the next day?

While we, and our clients, were prepared and made it through the recent blizzard unscathed, not everyone was so lucky. If you're involved in [Chicago retail construction](#),

or any type of commercial construction in a cold weather climate, take note of the checklist below.

1. Any commercial project started after Dec. 1 will run into some type of delay due to winter conditions, so [successful general commercial contractors](#) will plan accordingly. It's a red flag if winter conditions aren't factored into their schedule or bid.
2. If your project isn't at a certain point in construction by Dec. 1, then it might need to shut down temporarily. An experienced GC can help you weigh the construction costs of fighting winter conditions versus lost revenue if your project doesn't open on time.
3. Certain construction materials are in short supply in winter. The rule of thumb is you won't get asphalt until tax day since the plants shut down in December. If you need asphalt in the winter, expect premium commercial construction costs to re-open a plant.
4. You can still get concrete, but your commercial general contractor should factor in the cost of concrete warming blankets so it doesn't freeze.
5. Forget exterior painting and plastering if the weather is below 45 degrees. Same with brick and mortar.
6. Expect increased commercial project costs if you need to rent equipment, such as temporary propane tanks if there is no gas to the building; temporary heaters if the HVAC has not been installed; temporary enclosures for the face of a building; and ground thawing blankets if you have to dig into frozen ground.
7. If your project requires a construction crane to swing cables for pre-poured concrete panels, be prepared for additional crane rental days/fees as fierce blowing snow + swinging cables = safety hazard.

For those working on a retail construction build-out, don't think you've escaped winter conditions just because you're renovating an interior. At our [Trader Joe's retrofit on Diversey](#), our superintendents cleared snow for hours to ensure we could move materials around the site and get to the dumpsters.

Speaking of snow removal, we worked on one project where the shopping center landlord and retail tenant were still coming to terms with who was responsible for snow removal when we showed up to work. These matters should be finalized before a project even begins to avoid construction delays. And for tenants, make sure your maintenance budget allows for increased CAM (common area maintenance) charges due to high snow removal.

Folks, it's only February, so were not out of the woods yet. Stay safe and warm.

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