



OFFICE LOCATION

Ankin Law Office
162 W Grand Ave
Chicago, IL 60654

Tel: 312-346-8780
Fax: 312-346-8781

PRACTICE AREAS

Workers Compensation

Personal Injury

Motor Vehicle Accidents

Wrongful Death

Downtown Winters & Falling Ice

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Among the many hazards a person must look out for during the winter is the possibility of being hit by falling ice. It may be tempting to dismiss the likelihood of getting hit by a chunk of wayward ice as small – say, comparing it to the possibility of being struck by lightning or a meteor. However, in cities like Chicago, with months of inclement weather and hundreds of tall buildings, your chances increase dramatically.

There are a number of precautions you can take to avoid suffering a personal injury from falling ice or, as in some particularly unfortunate cases, death. For instance, always heed warning signs that are a common sight on winter sidewalks in downtown areas. If you witness ice falling in areas where no signs are present, avoid them as well. You may want to talk to the building's front desk personnel to notify them of the problem. You may even want to alter your normal route home or to work if it involves traversing hazardous areas, and walk quickly when you do have to pass through such zones.

Several years ago, a Wisconsin family sued Neiman Marcus as well as the building owners when the father was killed after being hit by a 100- to 200-pound chunk of ice in downtown Chicago. The family won \$4.5 million in damages for wrongful death after their attorney proved that the building managers failed to properly cordon off the sidewalk and keep the building clear of ice – the conditions had been treacherous for days, and they failed to properly warn the public.

Most personal safety measures involve common sense, and you can be careful without becoming paranoid. However, no matter how cautious you are, there is a chance that you could be hit. Should such a case arise, and you are seriously injured, you may want to consult a personal injury lawyer. The property owners as well as the tenants may be liable for failing to maintain their building properly or to post appropriate warning signs.