



Safety Matters

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SAFETY TIPS FOR THE WINTER SEASON

Prepare Your Home

Winterize your home to help protect yourself and your family from any potential damage the cold temperatures and snow may bring.

Follow these tips to keep your home safe and warm:

- Check your heating systems.
- Clean out chimneys and fireplaces.
- Closely monitor any burning fires or candles.
- Check your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.
- Remove ice and snow from walkways to prevent slips and falls.
- Keep an emergency kit in your home that includes flashlights, extra batteries, a first-aid kit, extra medicine, and baby items.
- If you lose power, your kit should also include food and water for three days for each family member, warm clothing if you have to evacuate, and toys and games for children.

Prepare For Outdoor Activities

Remaining indoors during the winter is appealing. But you and your family may want to venture outdoors to enjoy winter activities. When you do, take these steps to prevent serious injuries and illnesses, like hypothermia and frostbite:

- Wear layers of light and warm clothing, a wind-resistant coat, waterproof shoes, and a hat, mittens/gloves, and scarf.
- Work slowly when engaged in outdoor tasks, such as shoveling your driveway or removing snow from your car.
- Take a friend and carry a charged cell phone when participating in outdoor activities.

Avoid Snow Shoveling and Snow Blowing Injuries

Shoveling snow or using a snowblower are among winter's most grueling activities. High levels of activity in cold temperatures put many people at risk of heart attack, especially those that have inactive lifestyles.

While most people won't have a problem, shoveling snow can put some people at risk of heart attack. Sudden exertion, like moving hundreds of pounds of snow after being sedentary for several months, can put a big strain on the heart. Pushing a heavy snow blower also can cause injury.

And, there's the cold factor. Cold weather can increase heart rate and blood pressure. It can make blood clot more easily and constrict arteries, which decreases blood supply. This is true even in healthy people. Individuals over the age of 40 or who are relatively inactive should be particularly careful.

National Safety Council recommends the following tips to shovel safely:

- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking
- Take it slow and stretch out before you begin
- Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it's lighter
- Push the snow rather than lifting it
- If you do lift it, use a small shovel or only partially fill the shovel
- Lift with your legs, not your back
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion

Know the signs of a heart attack, and stop immediately and call 911 if you're experiencing any of them; every minute counts.

Don't pick up that shovel without a doctor's permission if you have a history of heart disease. A clear driveway is not worth your life.

Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide detectors save lives. Every year, over 400 people die and 50,000 are treated for carbon monoxide poisoning. If you do not have one in your home, get one! The most common symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are often described as "flu-like" – headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain and confusion.

WINTER DRIVING SAFETY TIPS

Prepare Your Car

Is your car ready for winter travel? It's not too late to winterize your car. Check out these car care tips to prepare you for winter driving:

- Check your tires and replace with all-weather or snow tires, if necessary.
- Keep your gas tank full to prevent ice from getting in the tank and fuel lines.
- Use a wintertime fluid in your windshield washer.

Make an emergency kit to keep in your car. Include water, snacks, first-aid kit, blankets, flashlight, extra batteries, portable cell phone charger, and emergency flares.

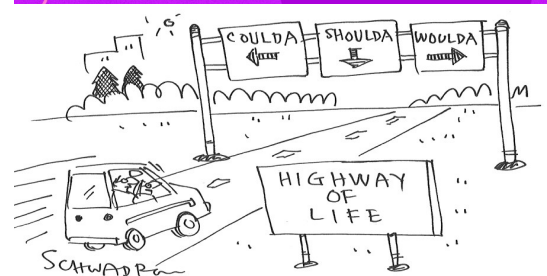
Follow these driving tips from AAA:

- Avoid using cruise control in wintry conditions
- Steer in the direction of a skid, so when your wheels regain traction, you don't have to overcorrect to stay in your lane
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly
- SLOW Down
- Increase following distance to 8 to 10 seconds

If possible, don't stop when going uphill. If visibility is severely limited due to a whiteout, pull off the road to a safe place and do not drive until conditions improve. Avoid pulling off onto the shoulder unless it is an absolute emergency. Limited visibility means other vehicles can't see your vehicle on the shoulder.



WELCOME 2022



JANUARY RIDDLES

1. What do snowmen call their offspring?
2. What did the icy road say to the car?
3. What do you call it when a snowman throws a temper tantrum?
4. What did Jack Frost say to Frosty the Snowman?
5. How do you make up a snowman's bed?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 2

(Safety Tips for the Winter Season, Winter Driving Safety Tips and page 2 sidebars come from online article "8 Winter Safety Tips", produced by [Community Health of Central Washington](https://www.communityhealthofcentralwashington.org/)).

Before You Shovel Snow, Consider...

Shoveling snow is a job for an athlete, even though people tend to think it is a routine activity that anyone can do.

In fact, shoveling snow takes a huge toll on the heart and back. One shovel of wet snow weighs 16 pounds. If you shovel 12 loads a minute, then in 10 minutes, you've moved 2,000 pounds, according to a study in the Journal of the American Medical Association. About 100 Americans on average die each year because of snow removal exertion, according to the Denver Post. About 12,000 suffer injuries that require a trip to the emergency room, according to a 16-year study reported in PubMed.

One key is to keep ahead of the drifts. Push snow several times while the snow is feathery, cold and shallow before it becomes heavy, wet and deep.

If you must shovel:

- * Keep your spine in an upright, neutral position.
- * Whenever you can, push the snow -- don't shovel it. You can use your large muscles in the hips and legs for pushing.

If you do have to lift:

- * Take small bites of the snow with the shovel only about a fourth full.
- * Use your leg muscles to lift the load.
- * Keep the load low to the ground and close to your body.
- * Avoid throwing the snow if you can. If you must throw it, throw light loads.

Breaks are critical

How long you can work depends on how heavy the snow is, your physical condition and how cold it is outside.

* If you feel fatigue, pain or shortness of breath, rest until you feel normal again. If you experience shortness of breath for a prolonged period, see your doctor immediately.

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"There is only one way to avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing and be nothing." - Aristotle

EMERGENCY ROOM—YES OR NO?

When should you go to the emergency room?

It's easy to see that an accident victim needs emergency treatment. Judging whether a medical condition requires a trip to the emergency room (ER) is more difficult.

Get to the ER fast, say doctors at Harvard Medical School, if any of these problems occur:

Severe abdominal pain. Especially if there is vomiting, swelling or tenderness of the abdomen or fever. This may signal appendicitis, bowel obstruction or a perforated organ.

Breathing difficulty. Go quickly if you have heart or lung disease, asthma, chest pain, rapid heart beat, swelling, dizziness, pale clammy skin or swollen tongue or throat.

Chest pain. People with coronary artery disease or angina should get help if pain begins during exercise and persists despite 10 minutes of rest or under-the-tongue nitroglycerin. It could signal a heart attack.

Confusion or changes in consciousness. Sudden onset of confusion or memory loss is an emergency. Altered mental status could be a sign of stroke or other serious problem.

Fractures. Suspected fractures should be evaluated promptly, except in the case of a finger or toe. Though not a case for an emergency room visit, a fractured finger or toe should be seen by a doctor as soon as is possible.

Headaches. Most can be treated in the doctor's office. Go to the ER if a headache is accompanied by confusion, nausea and vomiting, loss of sensation or muscle strength, fever or sensitivity to light.

Numbness or tingling. Widespread numbness or tingling can be due to a stroke. Get help immediately if one side of the body is affected, vision is blurred or distorted or if speaking is difficult.

Rash. Rash accompanies many illnesses, is a common reaction to certain foods and usually does not require immediate treatment. But purple spots on the skin accompanied by fever are signs of serious illness such as meningitis. Hives that appear after an insect sting are a signal to get immediate treatment.

Vomiting. This is an emergency if it produces blood or material that looks like coffee grounds. These are symptoms of serious problems that should be treated immediately. Cost is never a consideration when your life is in jeopardy. For these symptoms, get emergency room treatment as soon as possible.

The above articles on this page are taken from PagesMag.com, a subscription safety newsletter website paid for by the Insurance Coverage Office of the State of Delaware.

Prevent Falls This Winter

When the rain and snow starts to fall, so do people. In fact, falls are the leading cause of nonfatal injuries in adults 45 and older. Protect yourself from a life-changing injury this winter with these 7 safety tips:

1. **Choose the right shoe.** Shoes and boots need to fit properly and have soles with good traction. Snow boots or hiking boots will provide the best protection for the worst type of weather.

2. **Leave early.** Falls are more likely to happen when you're in a rush. Allow yourself plenty of time to get to where you're going.

3. **Walk like a penguin.** Take short steps and walk as flat-footed as possible on icy or slippery ground.

4. **Keep your hands free.** You'll need them to help you balance, so avoid carrying heavy loads and keep those hands out of your pockets.

5. **Remove snow and ice from walkways frequently.** Don't wait for it to melt. That could take awhile. Apply ice melt and ask for help if you need it.

6. **Keep the lights on.** If you have exterior lights on your home, use them to help see where you're walking at night.

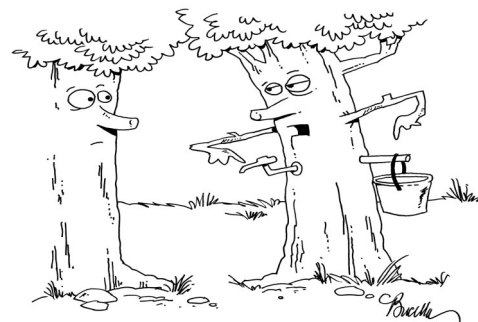
7. **Advocate for your safety.** If the entrances or sidewalks do not look safe outside of a business or a local venue, speak up and let someone know.

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

Keep a charged phone with you. Your cell phone can help with any emergency you may come across walking, driving, or playing in the snow. It's important to keep a charged cell phone with you or anyone you are out with, so you can call for help if anything were to happen! If you have an old smartphone, keep it on a very inexpensive plan hidden in the back of your vehicle (make sure you keep it charging). Not only is it good to have a backup cell in case of an emergency but your vehicle can be tracked if it ever gets stolen.

JANUARY RIDDLES ANSWERS

1. Chill—dren.
2. "Want to go for a spin?"
3. A melt-down!
4. "Have an ice day?"
5. Fresh sheets of ice and a thick blanket of snow.



"That one's for sap. This is hand sanitizer."