



# Safety Matters

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## 7 Important Winter Safety Tips for You and your Family

Different times of the year come with different safety challenges. While summer can mean heat-related ailments and injuries from outdoor activities, the winter season brings dangerously cold temperatures and icy conditions.

Here's a quick look at your winter safety risks and how you can reduce them:

**Frostbite** — This happens when parts of your body freeze. It can cause permanent body damage. To avoid frostbite:

- Dress in loose layers.
- Make sure extremities such as hands, feet, ears, nose and cheeks are covered. Mittens are a better choice in the cold than gloves for keeping fingers warm.

**Hypothermia** — This happens when the body temperature drops below 95 degrees. A sign of hypothermia is severe shivering. If not treated, shivering can give way to drowsiness, fatigue, confusion and shallow breathing. Get the victim to a warm space and remove wet clothing. Wrap victim with blankets or towels to warm them up. Always call for professional medical help.

**Slips and falls** — Think practical footwear with good traction. You can always pack your fashion footwear in a bag and take it with you. Salt, sand or kitty litter are helpful for improving the traction on icy sidewalks. Plan to wear gloves or mittens. Keeping your hands in your pockets leaves you more vulnerable to falling.

**Snow shoveling** — This job is more physical than you may be used to. Warm up your muscles before you shovel. Choose the right shovel. A short shovel for lifting snow. A long shovel for pushing snow. Pushing snow is easier than lifting it and is the recommended manner of snow removal wherever possible.

**Carbon monoxide poisoning** — December and January are peak times for this health issue. A functioning carbon monoxide detector can save lives. For your family's safety, check your detectors monthly. Replace your detector's battery in the spring and fall. Use only heaters approved and properly installed for indoor use. Don't run a vehicle in an enclosed space. If you are one that likes to warm your car up before traveling be sure to move the car outside of an attached garage to do so. Carbon monoxide fumes can seep through house walls.

**Automobile accidents** — Traffic accidents are becoming more common. Ice and snow surprise lots of drivers, even later in the season. Avoid being an accident victim by checking weather before traveling, winterizing your car and your tires, setting your phone aside while you drive (no texting or surfing) and following good winter driving tips.

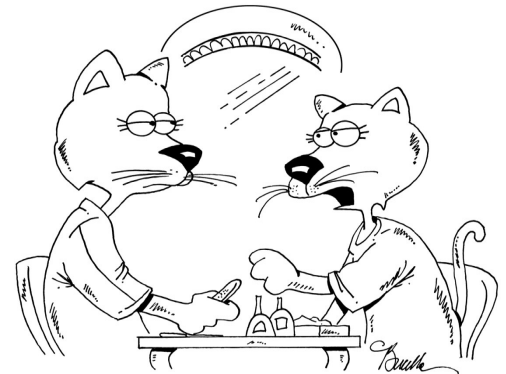
**Fires in the home** — Fireplaces and candles cause fires and burns every winter. One study found candles cause 25 reported home fires every day. Most of these fires happen because something combustible comes in contact with the flame. Have your fireplace professionally inspected. The inspection frequency depends on how you use your fireplace.

Take time to follow these tips each winter, and you'll dramatically reduce your chances for injury – or worse.

# Happy New Year!

### Walking Over Ice

- In cold temperatures, approach with caution and assume that all wet, dark areas on pavements are slippery and icy. Dew or water vapor can freeze on cold surfaces, forming an extra-thin, nearly invisible layer of ice that can look like a wet spot on the pavement.
- Walk in designated walkways as much as possible. Taking shortcuts over snow piles and other frozen areas can be hazardous. Look ahead when you walk; a snow- or ice-covered sidewalk or driveway, especially if on a hill, may require travel along its grassy edge for traction.
- Taking shortcuts through areas where snow and ice removal is not feasible can be hazardous.
- Bend slightly and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible.
- Extend your arms out to your sides to maintain balance. Beware if you are carrying a heavy backpack or other load—your sense of balance will be off.
- If you must carry a load, try not to carry too much; leave your hands and arms free to balance yourself.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets. Hands out of your pockets while walking lowers your center of gravity and increases balance. You can help break your fall with your hands free if you do start to slip.
- Watch where you are stepping and GO S-L-O-W-L-Y !! This will help your reaction time to changes in traction.
- When walking on steps always use the hand railings and plant your feet firmly on each step.
- Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles; use the vehicle for support.
- Take short steps or shuffle for stability. It also helps to stop occasionally to break momentum.



"Trimmed, but not so much that I can't claw up the furniture."

### RIDDLES OF THE MONTH

1. How does a penguin build a house?
2. How do you scare a snowman?
3. What is it called when a snowman has a temper tantrum?
4. What kind of math do Snowy Owls like?
5. What happened when the icicle landed on the snowman's head?
6. What did one snowman say to the other snowman?

Answers on Page 2

# SAFETY TIPS FOR SNOW REMOVAL

That first snowfall of the year is a truly beautiful event. But getting back into winter routines and snow removal habits isn't always the easiest transition. This is a season where a safety-first attitude can save the day and we've got your back — literally! Study up on these tips today.

## Shoveling Snow Safety Tips

One of the biggest snow removal tasks is shoveling. In big storms you may find yourself removing snow from the same spot more than once — and that's okay, as long as you're doing it safely.

**Check with your doctor.** If you have a history of problems with exertion, shoveling, lifting, etc. you might be better off sitting out this shoveling season. If your doctor feels you're not quite up to shoveling, they're probably right. After all, doctor knows best!

**Stretch your muscles.** Shoveling is pretty strenuous exercise and should be approached the same way as a trip to the gym. Warming up and stretching your muscles first can help you prevent injuries and prepare your heart for activity.

**Dress for shoveling.** Hands and feet should be protected from cold and wet snow to prevent frostbite. Cover your head, ears and face so exposed areas get the warmth they deserve — especially when the wind is biting back. Layering jackets and sweatshirts will help you regulate your core temperature.

**Use your shovel.** Having a good shovel that's built for your height is a quick and easy way to prevent back injury and strain.

**Work on your form.** Try to focus on lifting with your legs and not your back. Did you know flipping snow over your shoulder puts more strain on your body than pushing or walking shovelfuls of snow to the side?

**Shovel often.** One of the best ways to prevent injury and ice build-up is to shovel often. Rather than waiting until Mother Nature has given you all she's got — head out early and often and tackle the heavy white stuff a little at a time.

**Stop the ice.** When you have removed enough snow to hit pavement, work to prevent ice from forming by scattering sand, salt or kitty litter.

**Pay attention to walkways.** Protect others by clearing snow and ice from all walkways. Be sure to clear snow from all fire exits and points of egress.

## Snow Blower Safety Tips

**Know your blower.** If the snow blower is new, read the instructions so you know what to expect. Even if you've had this snow blower for a while, it's always a good idea to refresh yourself when winter rolls around.

**Fuel before.** The safest approach to adding fuel is to do it before you begin working. Adding fuel to a hot or running engine should always be avoided.

**Keep hands and feet out of the blower.** If the chute gets clogged, turn off the snow blower and give it time to come to a complete rest. Then use a solid object (stick or snow scraper) to unplug it.

## How to Remove Snow from Your Roof Safely

While your sidewalk and driveway may be your top priorities for snow removal, your roof should be given some attention too. Even roofs with a healthy slope can accumulate snow and ice and this added weight and water puts a strain on your roof. Use our tips to safely remove snow from your roof.

**Use a roof rake.** A roof rake lets you stay firmly on the ground and pull the snow down. They're designed to be safe for your roof and shingles and the telescoping handle gives you reach.

**Look out.** You want to stay on the ground as much as possible and pull the snow down, but don't pull it onto yourself. Stand to the side and avoid dumping heavy, wet snow on yourself. Remember to also keep an eye out for falling icicles.

**Work in small batches.** It's tempting to create a pile of snow on the roof and then pull it all down, but this isn't the safest approach — for you or your roof. Pull small amounts toward you at a time. Work from the area closest to you and then move upward.

**Don't forget the icicles.** While hanging icicles can be pretty, they can also be pretty dangerous. Build-up of ice, or ice dams, prevents gutters from working correctly and can push back into your roof, causing future problems. They can also snap off and cause damage or injury.

**One last tip that's a great one for the whole season** — no matter what you're doing. Have your phone handy so you can call or text if you need help. Remember, safety-first for a better, happy winter season!

## SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

When using space heaters, follow these safety guidelines:

Keep heat sources, like space heaters, at least 3 feet away from drapes, furniture, or bedding. Never cover your space heater. Never place a space heater on top of furniture or near water.

Never leave children unattended near a space heater.

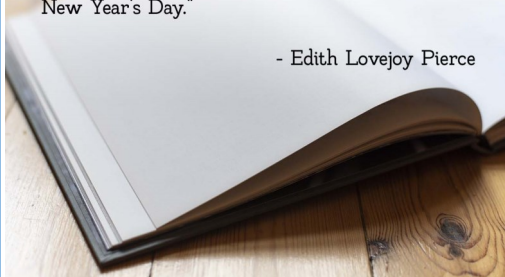
Make sure that the cord of an electric space heater is not a tripping hazard, but do not run the cord under carpets or rugs.

Avoid using extension cords to plug in your space heater.

## QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day."

- Edith Lovejoy Pierce



## CARBON MONOXIDE FACTS

### Why is carbon monoxide so dangerous?

Carbon Monoxide robs you of what you need most: oxygen, which is carried to your cells and tissue by the hemoglobin in your blood. If you inhale CO, it quickly bonds with hemoglobin and displaces oxygen. This produces a toxic compound in your blood called carboxyhemoglobin (COHb). Carboxyhemoglobin produces flu-like symptoms, for example: headaches, fatigue, nausea, dizzy spells, confusion, and irritability. Since symptoms are similar to the flu, carbon monoxide poisoning can be misdiagnosed. As levels of COHb rise, victims suffer vomiting, loss of consciousness, and eventually brain damage or death.

### Who is at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning?

Everyone is at risk from CO poisoning because everyone needs oxygen to survive. Medical experts believe some people maybe more vulnerable to CO poisoning: unborn babies, infants, children, seniors, and people with heart and lung problems due to higher metabolic rates.

### How can I help protect against carbon monoxide poisoning?

Having an early warning is important. Install carbon monoxide alarms outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement, as recommended by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Choose a CO alarm that is tested and listed by a Nationally Accredited Lab such as ETL or UL. Have your appliances checked regularly. Have a qualified appliance technician check all fossil fuel burning appliances, venting and chimney systems at least once a year, or as recommended by the manufacturer. It is critical to identify potential dangers and take safety measures to help protect against this serious threat.

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE



"Oh, no, the tourists are starting to arrive."

## RIDDLES OF THE MONTH ANSWERS

1. Igloos it together!
2. You get a hair dryer!
3. A meltdown!
4. Owlgebra!
5. It knocked him out cold!
6. Do you smell carrots?