

January Safety Tip

Snow, ice, and extreme cold can make driving treacherous. These safety tips from CDC, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the National Safety Council can help make winter car travel safer.

Before winter arrives, have your car tuned up, check the level of antifreeze, make sure the battery is good, and check your tire tread or put on snow tires.

Keep emergency gear in your car for everyday trips:

- cell phone
- flashlight
- Jumper cables
- sand or kitty litter (for traction)
- ice scraper, snow brush, and small shovel
- blankets
- warning devices (e.g., flares, reflectors)

For long car trips, keep food, water, extra blankets, and required medication on hand.

Avoid driving in snow or ice storms. If you must travel in bad weather, drive slowly. Let's someone know what route you're taking and when you plan to arrive so they can alert authorities if you don't get there.

If your car is parked outside, make sure the exhaust pipe and the area around it are free of snow before you start the car. Snow packed in or around the exhaust pipe can cause high levels of carbon monoxide in the car.

Don't sit in a parked car with the engine running unless a window is open. Do not let your car run while parked in a garage.

If your car stalls or gets stuck in snow, light two flares and place one at each end of the car, a safe distance away. Make sure snow has not blocked the exhaust pipe. Then stay in your vehicle and open a window slightly to let in fresh air. Wrap yourself in blankets and run your vehicle's heater for a few minutes every hour to keep warm.

February Safety Tip

Winter Safety Tips

To help ensure a safe and warm heating season, many experts recommend an annual inspection and tune-up of home heating systems before temperatures begin to drop.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International offers the following tips:

- Have your heating system inspected by a qualified service professional at least once a year. This inspection should include lubrication and cleaning, replacing filters, a check of belts and thermostats and having vents cleared of obstructions, as necessary.
- Make sure window air conditioners do not allow cold air to sneak through or around sides, top and bottom, putting an extra strain on heating systems and adding cost for homeowners. Local hardware stores can provide covers and other easy, low-cost ways to keep that cold air out.
- Caulking around windows and other openings can stop the cold air invasion dead in its tracks. Caulking and a caulking gun from your local hardware are inexpensive and easy to use. A warmer home and lower utility bills can result.
- Use products only for their intended purposes. Hair dryers aren't intended to thaw frozen pipes, dry clothing or warm bedding.
- When using a portable electric heater, keep flammable materials – bedding, clothing, draperies, rugs and furniture – at least three feet away even if it has safety features such as cut-off switches or heating element guards.
- If you use an electric blanket to keep warm on a cold night, follow the manufacturer's instructions and make sure you turn it off and unplug it when it's not in use. Never tuck an electrical blanket in.

March Safety Tip

Plug Into the Facts

Electricity is there to help brew your morning coffee, operate your computer, heat your home, and run your television. We use electricity so often that we seldom think about the dangers.

Take a moment to think about how often you depend upon electricity and answer the following questions. Every question you answer with "no", is an opportunity for you to make your home a safer place to live.

- Are heat producing electrical appliances unplugged when you are not using them?
- Are electrical cords in good condition, not frayed or cracked?
- Are electrical outlets overloaded in your home?
- Are electrical cords kept out from beneath furniture and rugs?
- Do all outlets and light switches work?

Never use water on an electrical fire, you could get shocked. If the fire is small, turn the power off and use a multi-purpose (ABC) dry-chemical extinguisher to put out the fire. If you can't turn the power off, or the fire is large, evacuate your home and dial 9-1-1 from a safe phone.

April Safety Tip

Seat Belts

- Always wear your seat belt. Insist that passengers wear theirs as well. A person who is not wearing their seatbelt can become a hazard to others during an accident.
- Always wear both the lap belt and shoulder belt. The lap belt should be positioned across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt should be across the chest.
- Never slip the shoulder belt behind your body. Without the shoulder belt support you may be thrown into the dashboard or steering wheel during an accident.
- Never wear the shoulder belt under your arm. If it is improperly positioned during impact, you may suffer broken ribs.
- Be sure the belt fits snugly against your body.
- Pregnant women should wear their seatbelts.
- Avoid holding objects in your hands while driving. They may be driven into your chest or face during an air bag deployment.
- Move the front seats back. During an accident this may help prevent injuries from air bag deployment or keep you from hitting an object in front of you. You should be at least ten inches from the airbag and seated toward it.
- Children under the age of 12 should always ride in the back seat.
- Children in safety seats should ride in age- and size-appropriate seats. Child seats should never be placed in the front seat.

May Safety Tip

"WHAT DID YOU SAY?" HEARING LOSS IS DEAFENING!

Noise is unwanted sound. It can have different effects on all of us.

Psychological effects mean that noise can startle us, annoy us, and disrupt our concentration. Noise can interfere with our communications when we are talking with others. As a consequence, it interferes with our job performances and our safety.

Physiological effects mean that we can lose our hearing. Noise can cause pain and even nausea when the exposure is severe.

Ear protectors, in effect, reduce the noise levels at the inner ear. Ear protection is particularly important when noise exposures cannot be controlled adequately by changing the environment around us.

Ear protectors may be either earplugs or earmuffs and must have the adequate Noise Reduction Rating, or NRR, to reduce the amount of noise we are exposed to in the workplace. We also must have a good "seal" when wearing our hearing protection. Without the proper fit, hearing protection may not be as beneficial as expected and still result in damage to our hearing.

Three factors may be used to determine the level of noise around us:

1. If it is necessary to speak in a very loud voice or shout to be understood, it is likely that the exposure limit for noise is being exceeded.
2. If you have heard noises and ringing noises in your ears at the end of the workday, you are being exposed to too much noise.
3. If speech or music sounds muffled to you after leaving work, but sounds fairly clear in the morning when you return to work, there is little doubt about your being exposed to noise levels that can eventually cause a partial loss of hearing that can be permanent.

If any of these conditions exist, contact your supervisor and request a safety professional monitor the sound levels by using a sound level meter, the safety professional will measure the noise level at various work areas. They can then determine whether the exposure is great enough to require implementing a Hearing Conservation Program at your work location. NIOSH has an on-line pamphlet that can provide you with further information.

A Hearing Conservation Program is mandatory per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, when sound levels have exceeded the permissible exposure limits (PELs) determined and must consist of a written documented program describing the processes of hearing conservation at the location, sound monitoring, baseline and annual audiometric (hearing) tests for employees, and proper hearing protection and training of the program, along with annual updates and reviews of the program.

Remember, when in doubt or if you have to shout- wear properly fitted hearing protection.

For additional information regarding OSHA's Noise and Hearing Conservation Program, go to their web page at <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/noisehearingconservation/index.html>.

June Safety Tip

Lockout and Tagout

Always lock or tag the energy sources to gear and equipment before you start to do maintenance or repairs on them. You may need to lockout or tagout something during construction, installation, adjustments, inspections, and modifications.

Energy sources include electrical, hydraulic, and pneumatic. Some energy is potential, such as the energy stored in capacitors, compressed air or springs.

- Never remove or ignore locks or tags on machinery or circuits.
- Don't try to bypass lockouts or tagouts.
- Remember that tagouts are warnings only.
- Before you start to tag or lock something out, make sure that everyone affected knows what is going on.
- Locks and tags must be durable; readable if exposed to water or chemicals; easy to identify; standardized in shape and color; marked to identify who is using it.
- Know the seven steps to de-energizing something and applying a lockout or tagout.
- Understand the equipment and its energy source
- Is there a checklist or written procedure?
- Turn off the equipment
- Isolate all the sources of energy
- Apply the lock or tag
- Control any residual energy
- Verify your work

July Safety Tip

Heat Stress Prevention

High temperatures and humidity stress the body's ability to cool itself, and heat illness becomes a special concern during hot weather. There are three major forms of heat illnesses: heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke, with heat stroke being a life threatening condition.

Heat Cramps

Heat cramps are muscle spasms that usually affect the arms, legs, or stomach. Frequently they don't occur until sometime later after work, at night, or when relaxing. Heat cramps are caused by heavy sweating, especially when water is replaced by drinking, but not salt or potassium. Although heat cramps can be quite painful, they usually don't result in permanent damage. To prevent them, drink electrolyte solutions such as Gatorade during the day and try eating more fruits like bananas.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is more serious than heat cramps. It occurs when the body's internal air-conditioning system is overworked, but hasn't completely shut down. In heat exhaustion, the surface blood vessels and capillaries that originally enlarged to cool the blood collapse from loss of body fluids and necessary minerals. This happens when you don't drink enough fluids to replace what you're sweating away.

The symptoms of heat exhaustion include: headache, heavy sweating, intense thirst, dizziness, fatigue, loss of coordination, nausea, impaired judgment, loss of appetite, hyperventilation, tingling in hands or feet, anxiety, cool moist skin, weak and rapid pulse (120-200), and low to normal blood pressure.

Somebody suffering these symptoms should be moved to a cool location such as a shaded area or air-conditioned building. Have them lie down with their feet slightly elevated. Loosen their clothing, apply cool, wet cloths or fan them. Have them drink water or electrolyte drinks. Try to cool them down, and have them checked by medical personnel. Victims of heat exhaustion should avoid strenuous activity for at least a day, and they should continue to drink water to replace lost body fluids.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is a life threatening illness with a high death rate. It occurs when the body has depleted its supply of water and salt, and the victim's body temperature rises to deadly levels. A heat stroke victim may first suffer heat cramps and/or the heat exhaustion before progressing into the heat stroke stage, but this is not always the case. It should be noted that, on the job, heat stroke is sometimes mistaken for heart attack. It is therefore very important to be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat stroke - and to check for them anytime an employee collapses while working in a hot environment.

July Safety Tip (con'd)

The early symptoms of heat stroke include a high body temperature (103 degrees F); a distinct absence of sweating (usually); hot red or flushed dry skin; rapid pulse; difficulty breathing; constricted pupils; any/all the signs or symptoms of heat exhaustion such as dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, or confusion, but more severe; bizarre behavior; and high blood pressure. Advance symptoms may be seizure or convulsions, collapse, loss of consciousness, and a body temperature of over 108° F.

It is vital to lower a heat stroke victim's body temperature. Seconds count. Pour water on them, fan them, or apply cold packs. Call 911 and get an ambulance on the way as soon as possible.

Anyone can suffer a heat illness, but by taking a few simple precautions, they can be prevented.

- Condition yourself for working in hot environments - start slowly then build up to more physical work. Allow your body to adjust over a few days.
- Drink lots of liquids. Don't wait until you're thirsty, by then, there's a good chance you're already on your way to being dehydrated. Electrolyte drinks are good for replacing both water and minerals lost through sweating. Never drink alcohol, and avoid caffeinated beverages like coffee and pop.
- Take a break if you notice you're getting a headache or you start feeling overheated. Cool off for a few minutes before going back to work.
- Wear light weight, light colored clothing when working out in the sun.
- Take advantage of fans and air-conditioners.
- Get enough sleep at night.

With a little caution and common sense, you can avoid heat illnesses.

August Safety Tip

Summer Safety Tip

Heat-related illnesses can become serious or even deadly if unattended. Drink plenty of fluids and take breaks in shade or air conditioning to avoid heat cramps and heat exhaustion, both of which are caused by heavy sweating during exertion, leading to excessive loss of water and salt.

September Safety Tip

Maintain a clean work area. Not only will you remove many hazards from a work area by keeping it clean, but you will also provide a more productive work environment for your employees.

October Safety Tip

Watch your step.....

Talking on your cell phone while leaving your office? Reading a report as you walk to your meeting? Watch it- many office accidents happen when people are trying to do too many things at once. Running into door frames, desks, filing cabinet drawers and other protruding objects typically occur when people aren't paying attention.

Thanksgiving Safety Tip

With fire-wise common sense, you can make sure tragedy does not come between you and the festive holiday you have planned. Follow these fire prevention tips to help you and your family have a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

- Keep your family and overnight guests safe with a working smoke detector on every level of the house, in every bedroom, and in the halls adjacent to the bedrooms. Test smoke detectors monthly and replace batteries at least twice a year.
- Overnight guests should be instructed on the fire escape plan and designated meeting place for your home.
- Have a fire extinguisher available not more than 10 feet from the stove, on the exit side of the room.
- A 2-1/2 lb. class ABC multi-purpose dry chemical extinguisher is recommended. Know how to use your fire extinguisher.
- Start holiday cooking with a clean stove and oven.
- Keep the kitchen off-limits to young children and adults that are not helping with food preparations to lessen the possibility of kitchen mishaps.
- When cooking, do not wear clothing with loose sleeves or dangling jewelry. The clothing can catch on fire and the jewelry can catch on pot handles, causing spills and burns.
- Cook on the back burners when possible and turn pot handles in so they don't extend over the edge of the stove.
- Never leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the stove or have someone else watch what is being cooked.
- Keep Thanksgiving decorations and kitchen clutter away from sources of direct heat.
- Candles are often part of holiday decorations. Candles should never be left burning when you are away from home, or after going to bed. Candles should be located where children will not be tempted to play with them, and where guests will not accidentally brush against them. The candle holder should be completely noncombustible and difficult to knock over. The candle should not have combustible decorations around it.
- If smoking is allowed inside, provide guests with large, deep ashtrays and check them frequently. After guests leave, check inside and under upholstery and in trash cans for cigarette butts that may be smoldering.

Christmas Safety Tip

- A real tree should not lose green needles when you tap it on the ground.
- Cut 1 inch off the trunk to help absorb water.
- Leave the tree outside until ready to decorate.
- The stand should hold at least 1 gal. of water.
- A 6' tree will use 1 gallon of water every two days.
- Mix a commercial preservative with the water.
- Check the water level every day.
- Secure the tree with wire to keep it from tipping.
- Keep tree away from floor heaters, fire places, or other heat sources.
- Use only UL-approved lights, and no more than 3 strands linked together.
- Use miniature lights--which have cool-burning bulbs.
- Turn off the Christmas lights when you sleep, or if you leave your home for very long.
- Never use candles, even on artificial trees.
- Clean the tree stand to improve the tree's water intake, use one capful of bleach to a cup of water.
- Dispose of the tree properly. NEVER BURN IN THE FIREPLACE.

Home Safety

- Install a smoke detector or new batteries in the one(s) you have and TEST it.
- Use only outdoor lights outside your home.
- Examine light strings each year, discard worn ones.
- Fasten the bulbs securely and point the sockets down to avoid moisture build up.
- Connect no more than three strands together.
- Never use indoor extension cords outside.
- Avoid overloading wall outlets and extension cords.
- Keep outdoor electrical connectors above ground and out of puddles and snow.
- Unplug light string before replacing a bulb. Review the original package to verify proper wattage and voltage.
- When connecting light strands, wrap a plastic bag around connections and tie ends with Teflon tape.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree, use colored spot lights.
- Make sure trees hung with X-mas lights are not touching power lines.
- When using candles, place them a safe distance from combustibles.
- Place candles in sturdy containers. Remember, hot wax burns kids.
- Extinguish candles prior to going to bed.
- Dispose of fireplace ashes into a metal container until cold.
- After parties, check around and under sofa and chair cushions for smoldering cigarettes. (Provide lots of ash trays)
- Install at least one carbon monoxide detector in your home.
- Have an operable fire extinguisher readily available.

Christmas Safety Tip (cont'd)

"Safety" gift ideas

Put together a gift basket containing one or more of the following items:

- Three smoke detectors and batteries.
- A quality fire extinguisher.
- A flashlight and batteries or light sticks.
- A first-aid kit.
- A carbon Monoxide detector.
- A mobile phone.
- A second floor escape ladder.
- "Emergency kit"- energy bars, water, battery radio, flashlight/light sticks and a first-aid kit packed in a small travel bag.

Please have an enjoyable and safe Holiday season.