

Tools for Life – Weekly Health & Safety Meeting



Home Healthy - Home Safe

Date: November 2022

Winter Preparation

Winter is approaching and it is important to prepare for the many hazards that arise due to the cold and adverse weather. These hazards include driving hazards, ergonomic hazards, cold-related injuries such as hypothermia and frostbite, slip, trip, and fall hazards, and carbon monoxide poisoning. Making sure you are prepped to face winter's worst is critical in preventing incidents and working through winter safely.

- 1. Drive Safely in the Snow** – Driving in the winter means the need to change the way you drive. Snow, sleet, and ice can lead to hazardous road conditions. Prepare your vehicle for the upcoming winter season by:
 - **Checking tires, to ensure there is a deeper, more flexible tread and that they are at an adequate pressure.**
 - **Inspecting wiper blades and replacing if needed.**
 - **Before driving, removing dirt, ice, and snow from all windows and sensors.**
 - **Avoid using cruise control in wintry conditions.**
 - **Accelerate and decelerate slowly**
 - **Increase following distance to 8 to 10 seconds.**
- 2. Avoid Shoveling Injuries** – Shoveling snow or using a snowblower are among winters most grueling activities. High levels of activity in cold temperatures increase the risk of ergonomic injuries as well as increasing stresses on the body, that could result in a heart attack, especially for those that have inactive lifestyles. Prevent shoveling and snowblowing injuries by:
 - **Stretching before going outside to shovel or work in cold weather**
 - **Taking frequent breaks when shoveling or snowblowing**
 - **Maintaining an active lifestyle and eating healthy**
- 3. Prevent Frostbite and Hypothermia** – Wearing warm clothing that does not constrict blood flow is important to preventing frostbite or hypothermia. Use first aid to help someone who may have hypothermia or frostbite. Online and classroom first aid courses are available to schedule with Apollo Safety, and the National Safety Council (NSC) offers a first aid app showing how to give first aid for frostbite, hypothermia, and many other emergencies.
- 4. Walk carefully on snowy, icy walkways** - Winter weather can promote slip, trip, and fall hazards due to snowy, icy, and wet walkways. Be aware of your surroundings and use caution when walking on slippery surfaces. Shovel or snowblow walkways that are covered in snow. Use snow and ice melt on surfaces that have built up snow and ice. Snow can hide existing hazards.
- 5. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that often goes undetected, catching victims caught off guard.** The "invisible killer" is produced by burning fuel in cars, trucks, small engines, stoves, lanterns, portable generators, and furnaces. When the gas builds up in enclosed spaces, people or animals that breathe it in can be poisoned. Never warm a car inside your garage. Even with the garage door open, carbon monoxide can build up rapidly and cause poisoning in minutes.

HEALTH OR SAFETY REMINDER: Prepare for weather related emergencies, including power outages. Keep an up-to-date emergency kit in your car and home including battery operated flashlights and lamps, a first aid kit, extra batteries, and even stock food that needs no cooking. Weather emergencies can strike at moment's notice so prepping before hand can greatly reduce the severity.

Discussion Points / Question:

- 1. What other items on a vehicle should be checked to better prepare for the winter?**
- 2. Can too much clothing prevent warmth and increase the risk of cold injuries? Why or why not?**