



# Comfort Zone

## Have yourself a Merry Eco-Christmas!

December: Traditionally the time where budgets, eating habits, and housekeeping rituals go out the window to make room for the holidays. And then, when it's all over, we spend the following 11 months of next year recovering from it.

This perspective, as pessimistic as it may seem, can give us a chance to think about ways we can enjoy the holidays by injecting a few new traditions to take the world we live in today into account.

### Here are a few suggestions from the World Wildlife Federation:

**Quality not quantity:** Sure, a Christmas tree overflowing with gifts looks fantastic, but how often have we bought gifts simply for the sake of adding more to the pile? When buying gifts think less but better, putting the time into picking a quality item that will last a long time. This reduces the chances of gifts going to waste and can be better for your wallet.

**Gift an experience:** Gifting an experience will reduce demand for physical resources. Bring people together by gifting your time or a pre-bought experience. There are lots of options to choose from that will reduce your holiday footprint. You could buy tickets to shows, concerts or events. Gift a homemade



coupon book. Make a restaurant reservation or give a gift card.

**Remove packaging:** Reduce waste even further by buying gifts with little or no packaging. Sometimes shopping local can help with this, especially if you have a local refill shop. If you must use packaging, use recycled, or recyclable, materials. Avoid plastic where possible, and don't forget your reusable bags to carry all your shopping home.

**Test your wrapping skills:** Look for cards and wrapping paper made from recycled paper. Avoid plastic ribbon and tape or foil-backed wrapping paper. Choose cards that you can recycle (this means no foil or glitter!).

**Cut your food waste:** Food production is the biggest cause of tropical deforestation. Try to cut any waste by planning ahead - be realistic about how much food you need and use up leftovers. Instead of clingfilm over a plate which is not the healthiest option, use food containers to keep leftovers nice and fresh. Think about your lights: Use LED lights to decorate. They use less energy, last longer and look just as good! Also, switch off your lights at night - it's safer and won't raise your December electricity bill.

**Make your own decorations:** Save yourself some money by upcycling old decorations. Or make your own using spare material around the house.



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## Minutes count when sudden cardiac arrest strikes

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) can occur without warning and usually results in death if not treated within minutes. Different from a heart attack, SCA occurs when the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating.

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, as many as 35,000 Canadians experience a sudden cardiac arrest each year. As many as 85% of all SCAs happen in homes and public spaces and many are witnessed by a family member, co-worker or friend. In these situations, the survival rate from SCA is less than 5%.

However, early access to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillation (1 to 3 minutes after cardiac arrest) may increase the chance of survival by 75% or more.

That's why it's important for Canadians to learn how to recognize SCA and to be ready, willing, and able to jump in and take fast action. Immediately delivering CPR (to keep the blood flowing) and using a defibrillator within five minutes gives the best chance for survival.

Since 2010, Heart & Stroke, together with funding partners, has placed more than 15,000 automated external defibrillator (AEDs) in communities across Canada in places such as community centres, playing fields and parks, and public transit stations.

According to Heart & Stroke, anyone can use an AED, you don't have to be a medical professional. The device is smart - it will only administer an electrical shock to a heart that needs it. You cannot hurt, you can only help. AEDs may look different, but they all operate in fundamentally the same way.

### You can use an AED by following three basic steps:

**Turn the power on.** Either open the lid or press the power button. All AEDs give voice prompts. They also display clear, simple visual instructions.

**Attach the AED pads to the person's bare chest.** There will be an illustration on the AED pads; place the pads exactly as shown in the pictures.

**Press the shock button if the voice prompt tells you to.** If no shock is advised, continue doing CPR (if you know how) until emergency medical services arrive.

Perhaps CPR training is the gift you give yourself this year. With proper training, you could save a life.



## Avoiding health risks this holiday season

(NC) With the holiday season upon us, you might be wondering how to plan your celebrations without creating health risks. As we have learned to live with COVID-19, it's easier to feel comfortable and prioritize fun, but no one wants to create a super-spreader event or be the cause of someone's illness. So, here are some steps to consider to make your time together safe and enjoyable:

### Set up simple precautions

Implement simple steps that will help keep any event safe. Encourage clean hands by setting up soap dispensers and paper towels by the sink or place hand sanitizer near food. Avoid communal bowls of food like chips and instead portion them into plates or cups, or use utensils for self-service. Consider running a quality air filter or opening windows if the temperature allows.

### Communicate with guests

Let your guests know what you've done to make the setup safer so they can feel confident about attending. Remind them to stay home if they are feeling unwell or may have been exposed. We all know to stay home if there's risk, but the pressures of the holiday social season can make it hard to say no to events when unwell.

You can make someone's decision not to attend easier by saying it's okay.

### Consider the risk and situation

The state of the pandemic changes often, whether it's new variants or new vaccine approvals. As you're planning your get-together, keep in mind varying levels of risk.

It can be tempting to see COVID-19 as a cold or minor illness, but that's not the case for everybody. Not only does the disease increase the risk for longer-term health problems, but some people are also not able to mount a proper immune response even if they've been vaccinated. They might have a health condition or be taking medication that impacts their immune system.

Fortunately, in addition to the tips above, there are additional prevention and treatment options that can help protect immune-compromised people, such as monoclonal antibodies. These work by mimicking the body's natural antibodies to neutralize a virus.

You can learn more about the best ways to prevent or treat COVID-19 by speaking with your healthcare provider and by visiting [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca).

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# Winter can be a crash course for unprepared drivers

From coast to coast to coast, winter brings an increase in accident claims. Whether it's driving in heavy rain during the darker days, a trip up to the cold climates of a local ski hill, or getting to work on a snow day, the winter season spells trouble for motorists. On average, customer claims can go up more than a third during the winter months compared to the rest of the year, according to industry data.

## However, there are some simple steps to avoid a winter collision during subpar driving conditions:

1. Increase your following distance.
2. Focus your attention as far ahead as possible to anticipate lane changes, turns and curves.
3. Avoid passing other vehicles.
4. Slow down and allow extra time to get to your destination.

It's also important to be prepared if you get stranded roadside – a situation made worse in winter. Avoid the “garage-to-garage” mentality, going from your house to your destination and just throwing on a pair of shoes and a light jacket before getting in the car. Drivers should dress for the elements, even if you are only going a short distance. If you get in an accident or have car problems, a two-block walk or multiple-hour wait for assistance in below freezing temperatures could jeopardize your personal health and safety.

## Always travel with an emergency kit. Be sure to check it regularly, especially if you are going on longer trips. Include:

- A fully charged cell phone.
- A fully charged flashlight.
- First-aid kit.
- Blanket.
- Shovel and sand.
- Emergency food and water pack.
- Booster cables.

- Warning light or road flares.

- Extra windshield fluid.

- Extra gloves or mittens, socks and a toque.

## And if the unforeseen should happen, here are a few reminders:

- Stay in your vehicle. Staying inside your vehicle is the most important of all tips.

When your car breaks down in winter, staying inside is the smartest thing to do, unless your car engine catches fire, then you should pull over, shut off the engine, and get out of the car to get somewhere safe until help arrives.

- Staying in your car is recommended because it will help to keep you warm, dry, and comfortable. It will also help prevent you from catching hypothermia, frostbite, and other medical conditions that can arise due to cold weather. When waiting in your car, make sure to turn on your emergency flashers and ensure your exhaust pipes aren't blocked by snow. Also, run the engine occasionally for warmth and keep a window slightly open for better ventilation.

- Do not dig your car out of snow. If your vehicle is stuck in the snow so deep that it becomes immovable, it might seem like a common practice to dig it out yourself. However, shovelling snow away from your car's tires is often ineffective. It causes you to lose energy and may lead to frostbite and hypothermia. Instead of randomly digging your car out of a snowbank, call for help and wait for them to arrive. It is essential to conserve your energy and protect your body from cold and snow.

- Food and water. When driving in the winter it's always best to be prepared for the worse. Keep extra bottles of water in your car so you can stay hydrated if you breakdown. Also keep some snacks that can last a couple of months in your car. Pack foods like beef jerky, dried fruits, nuts, and any other packaged food that won't go bad.

# Pay attention to personal security

(NC) Whether you are returning home from the late shift or attending various holiday parties, the dark days of winter and unpredictable weather conditions make personal safety a big priority this time of year.

## While it's helpful to educate yourself, you shouldn't live your life in fear. Here are some tips to help you feel more secure when you are out and about this season:

### 1. Remember the basics

There are some general safety best-practices everyone should know, such as staying aware of your surroundings. Speak with your family, colleagues and loved ones about safety and talk about household safety rules you want to follow, such as locking your front door even when you're home.

### 2. Plan your route to and from home

Planning is key to optimizing your safety as you go from work events to holiday parties, and back home this season. Figure out how you are getting from A to B before you leave the house and always share your whereabouts with a friend or loved one. Rather than going alone, use ridesharing with friends and co-workers when possible. It not only ups your safety but often cuts down on transportation costs.

### 3. Consider smart tech options

With the days getting shorter, the evening and early morning commutes are getting darker. Consider discreet wearable personal safety devices that are disguised as necklaces, bracelets and keychains. These devices can instantly text your GPS location to select contacts or help connect you with emergency services, saving valuable time. But don't get too comfortable if you are using such a device. Stay alert in all circumstances and avoid taking unnecessary risks.







## Fire is a risk if we overload electrical outlets

Most people think of extension cords as basic workplace equipment that is not too complicated. After all, we use extension cords all the time. Why not grab any extension cord you see, and plug it into the nearest wall socket?

However, improperly used extension cords spark thousands of fires every year. Cords easily become overloaded in two ways: they aren't rated to handle the high-wattage devices plugged into them, or too many devices are plugged into them at one time.

The first type of overload occurs when, for example, you decide to plug in a space heater in your work area or under your desk using a cord rated to handle low-wattage devices such as single-bulb lamps. In these cases, cords can become warm or even hot to the touch, a warning that the cord is overtaxed. This heat can also degrade the cord itself, making it unsafe for future use.

The second overload occurs when everyone in your work area uses multi-plugs to add extra outlets to extension cords. We've all seen, and perhaps even perpetrated this hazard of extremely dangerous "nests" of a dozen or more electrical cords all feeding into one beleaguered extension cord. We tend to hide this jumble of cords out of sight, but that can make the situation even worse because, as we all know, out of sight is out of mind.

It's important to always make sure you know how much an outlet or power bar can withstand and if you don't know, ask someone who does.

### Reduce the risk by following a few simple tips:

- Check cords before use: Always check cords for damage before using them. If they are damaged, they could spark and cause a fire.
- Use a high-quality power bar: If you need to use several appliance and devices, ask maintenance or your supervisor for a power bar that can handle the load.
- Don't run cords under carpets or rugs: Doing this could cause damage to the cord and spark a fire in the rug.
- Use the right cords outside: Make sure all extension cords you use outside are weather proofed and suitable for how you are using them.
- Ensure that the extension cords you use are Underwriters Laboratory Canada certified. A ULC or UL mark on a product means that ULC or UL has tested and evaluated representative samples of that product and determined that they meet ULC/UL's requirements. In addition, products are periodically checked by ULC/UL at the manufacturing facility to make sure they continue to meet ULC and/or UL requirements. If you are using cords at work that are not certified, bring it to your supervisor's attention.

## Take good care of your knees

Your knee is a powerhouse joint in your body. It enables us to walk, sit, bend, pivot, lift, squat and turn without really thinking too much about it. But because of its wide range of motion and the delicate anatomy involved, the knee is one of the joints most prone to injury. A severe knee injury can change your life in a split second.

Even healthy knees are at risk of strain or injury due to repetitive motions. Since we use our knees every day and they bear the weight of our entire bodies, the joint is often one of the first to show wear and tear from aging and through conditions such as osteoarthritis.

**If you're in construction, plumbing, lay flooring or do electrical work, there's a good chance you spend a lot of time working while on your knees. Here are some tips to minimize the impact on them:**

- Change positions as frequently as possible.
- Stretch leg muscles before beginning work and after getting out of a cramped position.
- Stand up carefully after kneeling; your knees have been in a stressful position, and sudden movement can cause injury.
- Wear knee pads or use a cushion or other padding between your knees and hard tile, wood or concrete floors.

**Here are a few other ways you can help protect your knees:**

- Monitor your weight. The knee joint

supports most of your weight while you're standing or walking. Extra kilos put extra weight on your knees, so maintaining a healthy weight can go a long way toward preserving the health and strength of your knees as you age.

- Increase flexibility. Gently stretch your thigh and calf muscles before the workday starts and a few times throughout the day. This will minimize the tension on the tendons surrounding the knee, helping to relieve some knee joint pressure. Stretching helps maintain range of motion to promote a healthy knee joint.

- Strengthen knee-related muscles. Your knee joint doesn't work in isolation. Strengthening the muscles that surround and support the knee – including your thigh and calf muscles – can go a long way toward keeping healthy knees healthy. Low-impact exercises that target specific muscles are best. Ask your doctor to recommend some safe exercises to keep these muscles in strong working order.

If you have knee pain caused by a minor injury or an arthritis flare, rest it using the "RICE" method. Rest, ice, compression, and elevation (RICE) is good for this kind of knee pain. Give your knee some rest, apply ice to reduce swelling, wear a compressive bandage, and keep your knee elevated. However, if your knee pain is unbearable and is affecting your ability to walk or bend your leg, it's time to talk with your health care professional.

# Don't let your Christmas tree lead to tragedy this season

It's the Christmas holiday season, our most treasured time of the year. It's a time of celebration, joy and sharing time with family and friends. Unfortunately, this important time can also be one marked by tragedy if precautions are not taken against accidental fire.

According to the Canadian Safety Council, every year about 400 Canadians lose their lives in an accidental household fire. In fact, it's during the holiday season that the number of deaths caused by accidental household fires is at its highest.

## Here are a few safety tips to consider when setting up your Christmas trees this year:

- If possible, consider an artificial tree. They are much safer and cleaner.
  - Leave the tree outside until you're ready to decorate.
- The tree stand should hold at least 1 gallon of water. It's crucial to check the water level every day.
- Keep the tree away from floor heaters, fireplaces, or other heat sources.
- Use only CSA-listed lights, and no more than three strands linked together.
- Use LED lights—which have cool-burning bulbs.
- Turn off the Christmas lights when you sleep, or if you leave your home for very long.
- Examine light strings each year, discard worn ones.
- Fasten the bulbs securely and point the sockets down to avoid moisture build up.
- Have an operable fire extinguisher readily available.
- Practice an escape plan at least once a year. Make sure the whole family is involved.
- Make sure to dispose of your tree properly at the end of the season. Check with your municipality.



# Wood dust can be a serious health hazard

Wood dust is not only a potential fire and explosion hazard, it also can cause health problems.

Also commonly known as sawdust, it consists of fine particles that are a by-product of woodworking processes such as sawing, sanding, and other operations. When it becomes airborne, wood dust can irritate the skin and eyes, cause respiratory issues when breathed into the lungs, and has been linked to cancer of the nose area and upper throat.

Wood is classified as either softwood or hardwood. Softwoods come from coniferous trees such as spruce, pine, and fir. Hardwoods come from deciduous trees such as oak, alder, and maple.

The health effects from exposure to wood dust are due to chemicals in the wood or chemical substances in the wood that are created by bacteria, fungi, or molds. Adverse health effects are not common to all tree species, so controlling exposure begins by knowing which type of wood is being used and all hazards associated with that wood.

The most important factor affecting exposure to wood dust is the type of work being performed. Finer dusts produced by processes such as shaping, sanding, and routing are associated with higher exposure levels. The type

and quantity of wood dust generated is also related to the density of the wood. Hardwoods are generally denser than softwoods, and under similar conditions will usually produce more dust.

## Exposure to wood dust can be controlled using ventilation systems or respiratory protection. Follow your company's procedures in this area.

Here are several general controls to keep in mind:

- Maintain the sharpness and life of abrasives and tools.
- Use wet clean-up methods (such as wiping surfaces with a wet rag or mop).
- Practice good personal hygiene (such as washing or showering to remove dust from skin).
- Practice good housekeeping such as vacuuming.
- Do not blow settled dust.
- Bag and seal dust waste to prevent dust from re-entering the air.
- Clean clothes by washing or using a vacuum when washing facilities are not available.



## Do we need to worry about the flu this year?

(NC) With a deadly global pandemic at the top of everyone's mind over the last two years, catching the flu has probably been further down your list of concerns. But this coming flu season could be a major one, according to experts.

One factor that suggests a potentially active year is the Southern Hemisphere's recent flu season. Because they experience winter before countries north of the equator, the Southern Hemisphere's flu season is a strong predictor for how ours will turn out. And this year, countries such as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina experienced a significant flu season, according to the World Health Organization.

It's more important than ever to get your flu shot this year. After all, the flu is a serious illness. On average, more than 12,000 Canadians are hospitalized and about 3,500 die each year. Those who are older, very young children and people who are immunocompromised are at even greater risk.

One thing to keep in mind is that there are different kinds of flu shots to choose from. In Canada, there are recommended vaccines based on individual factors, such as if you're over 65 years old, pregnant, or if you have a chronic health condition. Your doctor or pharmacist can help you decide which vaccine is right for you.

So, if you're back in the office, the kids are going to school, you have travel plans coming up or are generally feeling like things are getting back to normal, it's a sound idea to get your flu shot.

To learn more and book your shot, talk to your doctor or local pharmacist.



# Holiday shopping hacks about spending wisely

(NC) When we're in the holiday spirit, it can be tempting to overspend. But is it worth the financial stress? Here are tips to keep in mind during this wonderful time of year to help you spend wisely.

### Have a plan for gift giving

If gift giving is important to you, make a budget and set a spending limit for each person on your "nice" list. Look out for sales to keep your costs down, just keep in mind how long the person will have to return it if it is not right for them. To lower expenses, you may also consider offering homemade gifts such as baked goods or handmade candles. Making your own gifts makes them extra special and may also allow you to spend quality time with your family while preparing them.

### Be careful with buy now, pay later offers

Many companies offer buy now, pay later plans, allowing you to purchase something without having to pay for it in full right away. Accepting this type of payment plan may seem like a great deal, but before signing on the dotted line do some thinking.

Determine if you can afford the higher interest charges and applicable fees if you miss a payment or can't pay off the balance by the due date. If you are already struggling with debt, making purchases this way could encourage you to spend beyond your means and make it hard to keep up with payments.

### Debit vs. credit

It might be convenient to fund your holiday spending with your credit card, but between rising interest rates and the higher cost of living, managing your debt load in the new year may be a challenge.

Your 2023 January credit card bill may be extra expensive because of a class action settlement between Visa, Mastercard and merchants. Businesses now have the option of adding a surcharge of up to 2.4% when you pay by credit card. To avoid these fees, consider another method of payment, such as debit.

Find more tips, tools and resources to help you spend wisely this holiday season, and all year round, at [Canada.ca/money](https://Canada.ca/money).

# Ways to prevent theft this season

During this time of year, thefts and break-ins increase significantly. Homes filled with gifts and cars with parcels piled up on the back seat are easy targets.

## Here are some ways you can ward off holiday theft:

- When shopping, consider going with someone so you are not alone. Be wary of taking loads of parcels to your car and returning to the mall. Watch your surroundings and hide parcels either in the trunk or under a blanket. Once you have finished shopping and are about to return to your car, have your keys in your hand so you are not fumbling to find them. Place bags inside each other so you are not carrying so many, allowing you to get into your car quickly and easily.
- Online shopping requires extra precautions. Parcels delivered to your home may be convenient, but this does not come without risk. Consider having your packages delivered to a depot where you can pick them up at your convenience, or if it is allowed by your company, have them delivered at work. If the packages will be delivered to your home, try to be there, or have someone you trust at home to accept the delivery, otherwise packages could be stolen if left on your porch. Also keep track of what will be arriving and with what delivery service. Many services even allow you to follow the delivery right to your door. If someone or a service arrives at the door unexpectedly, do not open the door right away. Ask to see ID. Watch for spoof or fake emails about deliveries as well. If you receive an email about a delivery or a product that you did not order, delete the email.
- Whether store-bought or online bought, once you get your gifts home keep them out of sight. Consider storing them in your basement or a closet that's away from main entrances.
- Be careful when disposing of the boxes from big ticket items, like TVs and computers. Don't set boxes out on the curb – it's an advertisement to thieves. Break boxes down and bury them inside your recycling bin.

# If you can't be seen, you're not safe

High-visibility safety apparel (HVSA) is worn to improve how well workers are seen, particularly by drivers and other vehicles or heavy machinery operators, especially in low light and dark conditions. Vests are the most common “hi-viz” apparel, but depending on the industry and weather, workers might choose to wear jackets, coveralls, pants, t-shirts, gloves, and hats.

The clothing should be comfortable to wear and fitted to the person.

The Canadian Standards Association standard for this type of clothing, CSA Z96-15, specifies how it should reflect light, what colours can be used, and how much of it a person needs to wear. It also provides advice on the selection, use, and care of high-visibility safety material and recommendations for hazard assessments. Other requirements such as flame resistance, thermal performance, water resistance, durability, comfort, tear-away features, material breathability, and flexibility may be required based on other hazards present.

Fluorescent material takes a portion of invisible ultraviolet light from sunlight, and through special pigments, sends it back to the viewer as more visible light. This material only functions where there is a source of natural sunlight. Fluorescent material will appear brighter than the same coloured non-fluorescent material, especially under low natural light. Retroreflective material is created to return light in the direction of the light's source. This property will let a driver or equipment operator see the light being reflected from the retroreflective material on a person's garment (as long as the person is standing in the light's

beam). Retroreflective materials are most effective under low-light level conditions.

While retroreflective materials can still reflect in the daylight, there is little difference between the light reflected from the garment's material and the surrounding environment. The retroreflective stripes or bands that are required on high-visibility clothing serve a similar purpose to the background material. They help increase worker visibility but are more effective at night or in low-light conditions. Retroreflective stripes reflect the light from oncoming headlights back to the driver or operator so that a worker can be seen in the dark.

## For all classes, the CSA Standard specifies both the colour of the background and the stripes/bands. To comply with the standard, any high-visibility safety apparel must meet the following criteria for the stripes/bands:

- A minimum width of 50 mm.
- A waist-level horizontal stripe/band that goes completely around the body at the navel or belly button.
- Two vertical stripes on the front passing over the shoulders and down to the waist.
- A symmetric “X” on the back extending from the shoulders to the waist.
- For Class 3 apparel, stripes/bands encircling both arms and both legs are added.





# Men four times more likely to have a heart attack when shoveling

For many Canadians shoveling snow is their least favourite winter chore. Research has also shown that it can be deadly.

Research completed at Queen's University in Kingston that found a clear link between shoveling snow and sudden cardiac events. The research also suggested that the risk for men was four times that of women and also four times greater if the person had a family history of heart disease.

The culprits are cold air, which puts extra strain on our hearts; the burst of start-and-stop effort; and the fact that most people don't warm up their muscles in advance.

## The Heart and Stroke Foundation also suggests the following tips:

- Don't shovel immediately after waking up or after eating a meal.
- Walk around for a few minutes or marching in place to warm up.
- Don't shovel after drinking coffee or alcohol; drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Cover your head and neck, as well as your mouth to warm the cold air slightly when breathing in.
- Take it easy! Clear the driveway in stages, don't overload the shovel and take a break if you feel out of breath. Just like you wouldn't run a marathon

without training for it, don't try to clear all the snow in one session if you are in less than top physical shape. Emergency medical officials urge people to talk to their doctors before shoveling season. If you've previously experienced a heart attack, stroke, or had heart surgery in the past, then you may want to ask a family member or neighbour for help.

## Here a few more snow-shoveling tips:

It's important to stay warm while you're exerting yourself outside in the cold, but as you continue shoveling, you'll likely warm up. If you dress in layers, you can take one or two off as you work so you don't overheat. And, if it starts to get chilly again, you'll have those layers nearby.

To avoid unnecessary slipping and sliding, as well as injuries from a potential fall, you'll want to wear well-insulated shoes with good traction. Duck boots are a great example, since they have a waterproof base, rugged soles and usually lace up high to help keep snow out of your shoes.

Using a heavy, awkward shovel will make it that much easier to hurt yourself while shoveling. If you can, buy a shovel with a smaller, plastic, curved blade (which is lighter than a metal one). If you only have access to a metal one, try pushing the snow out of the way — a la a snow plow — so you're not risking aggravating your back or joints.

# Pay attention at railway crossings

Winter conditions and holiday travel means we must be especially cautious on the roads this year, especially on routes with railway crossings. Remember trains cannot stop quickly and they cannot swerve to avoid a collision.

This year alone there have been 111 crossing incidents in Canada, resulting in 11 fatalities and 23 serious injuries. Thirty-four fatalities and 12 serious injuries due to trespassing incidents have also been recorded this year according to [operationlivesaver.ca](http://operationlivesaver.ca)

Obeying crossing signals is the most important thing you can do to avoid a rail collision. **Here are some other basic rail safety rules to remember:**

- Never walk on train tracks. It's dangerous and illegal.
- Never stay near a stopped train.
- Cross train tracks at designated highway/railroad crossings.
- Look for signals and respect them.
- Be prepared to stop at crossings.
- Cross the tracks in low gear; do not change gears while crossing.
- Stalled vehicle? Get out quickly and move away from the vehicle and tracks.
- Listen for warning bells and whistles when approaching a crossing.
- Remember one train can hide another.

When a train is passing through a crossing, or the gates and warning signals are activated, stop behind any gates or stop lines — or no closer than five metres from the nearest rail — and wait for the train to pass. Cross only after the warning signals have stopped and you are certain no other trains are approaching, from either direction, on any track.

Visit [www.operationlivesaver.ca](http://www.operationlivesaver.ca) for more information.





# Ways to avoid the perils of snow and ice

Today's safety meeting is about winter fall prevention.

Ice is slippery. It may seem silly to state the obvious, but what's not so silly is it that many of us still attempt to walk on ice with improper footwear or walk on ice with our hands so full there is no way to keep our balance.

Is it because that ice patch is close to the building entrance? Or maybe it's at the bottom of the outside step to your door? Or it could be we don't know it's there because it is hidden underneath some snow? There can be so many reasons why, but the fact remains that slipping on ice can cause very serious and painful injuries. The most important thing we can do is remember ice is here, there, and everywhere during winter. There is simply no avoiding it.

## Protect yourself from falling with these winter safety tips:

### 1. Look before you step

The best way to keep from falling is to watch where you are stepping. It's also important to look ahead at what you might be walking into. Move slowly and look over your surroundings. Find the path of least resistance, or in this case, the least snow-covered ice. Don't take chances when steps are covered with snow or ice. If there is no other way to enter the building, see if there is a way you can clear a path first.

### 2. Wear the right shoes

Even if you are required to wear dress shoes to work, soles without treads and ice don't mix. Wear boots with rough or textured soles to trek through the snow



and ice. These boots will give you much more traction than any dress shoe. While changing into and out of different shoes might seem like a hassle, it's much more important to protect yourself from falling.

### 3. Use handrails

Whether you're inside or outside, handrails are available to you for a reason. They obviously work. Whenever a railing is available to you, use it. Railings have been proven to keep people upright when they begin to slip. If you are concerned about touching handrails inside a building because of the germs that might be on them from other people, wash your hands, or carry a hand sanitizer with you to apply after you reach your office, or wherever you are going.

### 4. Watch the floors

Even after you have made it inside, watch

out for places that other people have walked. Snow and ice from other people's shoes will most likely have melted. Mix that in with tile or linoleum, and you have a recipe for disaster. Watch where you are walking for your first few steps inside to avoid these potential slipping hazards.

### 5. Relax

Tensing up when you fall can cause you to injure yourself more. While it sounds impossible, keeping yourself from fighting the fall can prevent serious injuries from happening. If you are falling forward, try to roll with the fall. If you are falling backward, attempt to sit down on your bottom.

### And when walking out in the wintry conditions we remind you to do the "penguin walk".

- Bend slightly and walk flat footed.
- Point your feet out slightly like a penguin.
- Keep your centre of gravity over your feet as much as possible.
- Watch where you are stepping.
- Take shorter, shuffle-like steps.
- Keep your arms at your sides (not in your pockets!).
- Concentrate on keeping your balance.
- Go slowly.

Always look for changing conditions on sidewalks and other areas. A fresh snowfall looks pretty but it can cover up hazards such as icy patches or uneven surfaces that may not be apparent.

Thanks for your attention today.

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① When walking out in icy or snowy conditions it's a good idea to take shorter, shuffle- like steps.

True      False

② It is normally not a good idea to wear high heel shoes in icy weather, even though changing your shoes at work is annoying.

True      False

③ Once you are inside of the building you don't need to watch out for slippery patches on the floor.

True      False

④ You should tense up when you feel yourself falling.

True      False

⑤ Holding handrails are way to prevent slipping on the stairs.

True      False

⑥ If you see a patch of ice on your path, you should avoid it.

True      False

ANSWERS: 1. True 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. True 6. True

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Have meeting attendees sign this sheet:


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