

SafetyCanada

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In Canada, of course we're no strangers to winter weather. The Great White North is famously home to snow, ice, sleet, strong winds and intense weather conditions.

As we move into the season, and especially in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its Omicron variant, getting outside and staying active will be more important than ever, both for physical and mental health purposes.

Here are a few tips on how you can stay warm, stay

safe and stay active.

- **Layer warm clothing.** The temptation is often to go heavy on clothes made of cotton, but this isn't an optimal choice. Cotton can retain moisture, which adds both weight and a chill. Stick to moisture-wicking fabric for your base layer, adding in fleece-like materials for your middle layers and sealing it all with a waterproof layer to ensure you stay dry all the way throughout the day.

Continued on page 3

Inside

President's Perspective.	2
Home Safe Home.	4
Looking Ahead.	4
Fall Campaigns.	5
On the Job	6



President's Perspective: Carbon Monoxide

As winter weather makes itself at home for the next several months, heating your home will be a priority to ensure the comfort of you and your family.

Whether your heating method of choice involves a furnace, a stove, lanterns, gas ranges or any kind of gasoline- or charcoal-burning device, it's a good idea to be familiar with the risks that can be associated — and specifically, it's a good idea to have an understanding of the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO).

Carbon monoxide is a colourless and odourless gas that can be toxic in even trace quantities. It's emitted when carbon-based material starts combusting but doesn't finish the process — usually owing to poor ventilation and a lack of oxygen in the process.

Once it enters the body, carbon monoxide interacts with our blood and reduces its ability to carry oxygen.

The practical impacts for us, then, become pretty visible and are generally in line with what we'd expect: dizziness, nausea, exhaustion, headaches, short and rapid breathing. Over a longer exposure, as more CO enters the bloodstream and inhibits oxygen uptake, brain and heart damage can enter into play.

Let me be plain: we have to plan ahead to prevent against CO poisoning. By the time we notice its presence, it's often too late. The fact that it can't easily be detected by sight or

smell makes it tricky to get a proper handle on without the right tools.

Invest in a CO detector and, if it goes off, get out of the house immediately. Call emergency services and do not re-enter your home until you are cleared to do so.

Of course, nobody wants to be forcibly evacuated from their home in the dead of winter. That's why avoiding the problem altogether is important here, too. Having a vent near anything that is burning is a good idea. If you need to use a portable device like a generator or camp stove, be sure you're using it within no less than six metres away from the nearest window, door or vent.

Carbon monoxide can't be reasoned with and doesn't care about whether it's a convenient time for you. It can strike anywhere, at any time, without the proper precautions. Keep your home and your family safe by planning for this silent killer before it makes itself known.

Make Safety a Priority!

Gareth Jones, President



Warm, Active, Healthy (Continued from page 1)

- **Stay hydrated.** Yes, even in the cold, remaining hydrated is of major importance! Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink — though environmental conditions won't accelerate the process, dehydration can still set in quickly while exercising.
- **Watch out for hypothermia.** If you find yourself or someone you're with suffering from slurred speech, slower reaction times and general confusion, hypothermia may be the root cause. This happens when the body drops below a certain temperature and can no longer produce the energy you need. Get to a warmer place as soon as possible.
- **The cold isn't for everyone.** If you'd rather

exercise indoors, you're not alone! Plenty of options exist to keep the heart pumping, from routine housework all the way to bodyweight exercises and stair-climbing.

This winter season is sure to be one that tests our mental limits on multiple fronts. Remaining active is a great, if not necessary, way to keep fit and sound of mind. Pace yourself, exercise at your own rhythm, and don't forget to be kind to yourself throughout the season!

Online Training

Did you know the Canada Safety Council offers online training in a range of topics? These include Occupational Health & Safety, home safety, child safety and more! Visit <https://canadasafetycouncil.org/online-training> for more info.



Brain Health Tips for Older Adults

(NC) Practicing healthy habits can help you live well throughout your life. Not only do they promote general overall health, but they also have the added benefit of reducing your risk of developing dementia.

Dementia can affect anyone. There's currently no cure and some risk factors like genetics can't be changed. Fortunately, there are many things you can do throughout your life to help reduce your risk of developing the condition. Here are some ideas to help:

1. Be active

- Try new activities you've always wanted to adopt — whether that's snowshoeing, hiking or salsa dancing.
- Vary your fitness routine to avoid boredom.
- Go outside to get some fresh air.

2. Stay social

- Reach out to old friends to catch up.

- Make new friends by joining a group activity — even if it's virtual.

3. Eat a well-balanced diet

- Plan your meals in advance so you have ingredients on hand.
- Frozen vegetables are convenient and are often less expensive than fresh. They're great for soups and stir-fries.
- Try a new recipe each week and develop a roster of your favourite healthy recipes.

4. Challenge your brain

- Learn how to play a new musical instrument or study a new language.
- Try a familiar task or activity in a new way: go for a walk in a new-to-you neighbourhood or park.

Find more information at canada.ca/dementia.

Fall Campaigns

The fall season is our busiest time from a campaign standpoint. We lead five national campaigns, starting with National School Safety Week in October and ending with National Safe Driving Week in December. Here's what you may have missed since the last issue of Safety Canada:

National School Safety Week (October 17-23)

One of the most important elements of formal education from a development standpoint is the opportunity to socialize in a friendly and open environment. For many school-aged children, the schoolyard is their main source of building relationships with peers. Group projects. Middle-school plays. Lunchtime in the cafeteria.

And yet, as with many of our day-to-day routines, the pandemic has altered the structure through which children get to see and interact with one another. This year, to mark National School Safety Week, the Canada Safety Council called attention to the mental health crisis that looms because of fewer opportunities to socialize.

National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month (November)

The overwhelming majority of Canadians engage in responsible gaming, according to the statistics. However, gambling addiction is a very real issue that affects not only the person affected by the disorder but also those in their orbit. November was National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month, and the Canada Safety Council reminded Canadians to gamble responsibly.

National Senior Safety Week (November 6-12)

One of the most noticeable effects of this pandemic for all Canadians has been more time spent at home. For seniors, the woes of long-term care homes have been well documented. But what of those who have lived in their own homes and continue to do so? It's a sad truth that home can be dangerous for seniors, whose bodies continue to change as they age.

National Senior Safety Week was November 6 – 12 and the Canada Safety Council provided tips on how to help the seniors in your life live in a safer home environment.

National Home Fire Safety Week (November 24-30)

Emergency can strike at any time. Having a plan in place can be a difference-maker in ensuring you and your family are able to get out safely. Are you prepared? November 24 – 30 was National Home Fire Safety Week and the Canada Safety Council reminded all Canadians to have a fire escape plan in case of emergency.

National Safe Driving Week (December 1-7)

Continuing our partnership with the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada, the Canada Safety Council highlighted the dangers of distracted driving with a simple message: focus on the road is not a part-time responsibility. The unexpected can happen in moments, meaning that even a second of extra reaction time can make the difference between an avoided collision and a potential tragedy.



Re-evaluate your Driving Habits

(NC) It's no secret that most people consider themselves good drivers, but as more Canadians take to the road, there is a real conversation – or debate – to be had about what safe driving looks like. You might be surprised to learn that the challenges can be different depending on your age.

According to a 2021 survey from insurance provider Aviva Canada, almost half of all Canadians picked younger drivers – those aged 20 to 30 – as having the most claims. But insurance claims data show that 41 to 50-year-olds are the ones who got into the most accidents, closely followed by those aged 31 to 40.

The same claims data shows that younger drivers are more frequently involved in rear-end related accidents and accidents due to left turns at intersections and changing lanes, compared to other ages. These types of claims are more severe and likely to lead to more injuries and damage to the vehicle.

On the other hand, drivers over 65 had more frequent claims for hitting a parked car or backing up and striking a fence, pole or sign – so this group should be more wary when navigating parking lots, particularly as we return to regular shopping habits.

Many crashes resulting from speeding and distracted driving are often preventable – such as hitting stationary objects, rear ending other vehicles and inattentive lane changes. Although auto accidents are not something that any driver wants to think about, taking measures to drive more safely can prevent the stress that comes with getting into a collision, even a minor one.

No matter what your age, an insurance policy that meets your unique needs is essential for protecting yourself, your vehicle and your wallet. If you're ever in an accident, make your insurance company or broker one of your first calls. They will be able to help you through the claims process to get you back to normal as soon as possible.

*Do you have a safety story, tip or pet-peeve to share?
 Email media@safety-council.org, tweet us @CanadaSafetyCSC or send us a post or a message on our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/canada.safety>.*



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6