Safety Canada
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Safety on the Slopes

Downhill skiing and snowboarding are widely popular winter sports, but they can also be dangerous sports if safety precautions aren't taken. According to the Canadian Ski Council report, *2007-2008 Canadian Skier and Snowboarder Facts and Stats,* there are now over four million Canadians participating in downhill skiing and snowboarding activities. With increasing popularity, comes an increase in the number of traumatic injuries and even fatalities, with traumatic brain injury cited as the main cause of death. Each year, hundreds of preventable head injuries are reported on Canadian ski, snowboard and toboggan hills. Injuries such as sprains and broken bones are also common. Most of these injuries can be prevented by wearing appropriate gear, such as a certified helmet, or obtaining proper training and knowledge, so you can have a fun-filled day on the slopes – accident free.

Helmets cannot prevent all head injuries, but they can significantly reduce your risk of a head injury. A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 2006, showed that helmets used for skiing and snowboarding are associated with 60 per cent reduction in head injuries.

In early 2009, Canadian Standards Association (CSA) announced the country's first recreational alpine skiing and snowboarding helmet standard, created to help protect winter sports enthusiasts on Canadian slopes. The standard defines the areas of the head that are to be protected for impact injuries and covers the basic performance requirements for shock absorption and helmet stability. Helmets that comply with the standard will be designed to sustain multiple impacts. This standard is a voluntary standard, and as a result there are no CSA-approved helmets on the market yet. In the meantime, until helmets are approved under CSA standards, Anthony Toderian, manager of media relations for the CSA, recommends people use standardized helmets from Europe (CE) or the United States (ASTM). He highly advises against buying helmets with no form of certification. Toderian hopes that CSA-approved helmets will be available soon.

As of right now, some ski hills in Canada, such as the Vancouver-based Intrawest, announced that it will recommend all skiers and snowboarders wear helmets at its North American resorts, which include Mont Tremblant and B.C.'s Whistler-Blackcomb, which will host alpine events during the 2010 Winter Olympics. In addition, Intrawest will make helmets mandatory for all children and teens enrolled in ski and snowboard programs and will also include helmets in all rental packages. Other ski hills are mulling over making wearing helmets mandatory, but most likely hold off until CSA-approved helmets are available.

Skiers and boarders must always be aware of their surroundings at all times and perform activities that coincide with their skill level. Falling, colliding with other people or objects, or losing control are the most common causes of skiing injuries. Take care on the slopes and follow these simple steps on how you can prevent injuries:

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Inside

President's Perspective

It may be because I enjoy the company of two teenagers at home, but I am noticing an increase in the consumption of energy drinks. There seems to be a number of different brands in Canada and are widely available in convenience stores, supermarkets, bars and gas stations. Often you will see them alongside the fruit drinks and soda pop. Some of the brands I have noticed include Red Bull, Impulse, SoBe and Diablo, but there are many others.

These energy drinks are not the same as sports drinks, such as Gatorade or Powerade, which have a specific purpose – to re-hydrate the body. Sport drinks provide sugars that the body burns to create energy and replenish electrolytes. In turn electrolytes maintain potassium and salt balances in the body. Energy drinks do not perform this function.

Energy drinks are meant to supply short-term mental and physical stimulation. Many contain caffeine and taurine (an amino acid, one of the building blocks of protein) and glucuronolactone (a carbohydrate). The problem with energy drinks arises when more is consumed than should be or if they are mixed with alcohol. They seem to have become quite popular at parties, in bars and at clubs. Rather than re-hydrating the body, like sports drinks do, energy drinks actually lead to dehydration.

A quick check with Health Canada shows that a few adverse reaction reports have been received, but it is not possible to ascertain if the symptoms reported were due to the effect of combining the energy drink with alcohol, or perhaps due to alcohol itself.

So, what to do? Well first of all, don't drink excessive amounts of energy drinks. Red Bull, as an example, has instructions on the label that limits consumption to two cans a day (about 500mL). Don't mix energy drinks with alcohol. If you are engaging in strenuous physical activity be sure to stay hydrated by drinking lots of water.

From where I stand, these energy drinks are safe when used as recommended; I do think that awareness of misuse needs to be better understood. Also, I suggest if anyone has a problem after consuming them, they should contact The Canada Vigilance Program of Health Canada. They can be reached toll free at 1-866-234-2345.

Safety, It's an Attitude

Jack Smith, President

WHEELS IN MOTION :
Cannabis and Driving

A report done by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, *Clearing the Smoke on Cannabis: Cannabis Use and Driving*, shows that young drivers are more likely to drive after using cannabis than to drive after drinking. The report is part of a series of publications that reviews the effects of cannabis use on a variety of aspects affecting human functioning and development. This report highlights evidence that driving after cannabis use now rivals or exceeds rates of drinking and driving among youth.

Results from a Canadian Addictions Survey found that around 20 per cent of drivers aged 16 to 18 reported driving after cannabis use. This evidence reflects similar findings in student surveys in both Ontario and the Atlantic provinces. In Ontario, 19.3 per cent of students in Grades 10 to 12 admitted driving after using cannabis; in the Atlantic provinces, 15.1 per cent of senior students admitted to having done so.

Similar research in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine on the prevalence of cannabis use among 15-year-olds in Canada, suggested that 30 per cent of boys and 28 per cent of girls smoked the drug in 2006.

Many young people may not know or understand the dangers associated with driving after using cannabis. It has been shown to impair a wide variety of cognitive and motor skills critical to safe driving — e.g., reaction time, divided attention, and responsiveness to surroundings. Awareness and educational programs are needed to inform both the general population and targeted audiences, such as youth, about the harms associated with driving after using cannabis and/or other drugs.

Canadians should be aware of new legislation in Canada that gives police the ability to demand that drivers suspected of using cannabis (or other drugs) submit to tests to determine presence of drugs and provide a sample of blood, urine or oral fluid to test for the presence of drugs.

Source: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

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Learn the slopes!

- Enrolling in ski or snowboard lessons with a certified instructor is a great way to learn the principles of your chosen sport, develop a proper technique, as well as learn the proper way to use the ski lift.

Get geared up!

- Wear a certified ski helmet that has side vents to allow for hearing.
- Equipment should be properly fitted and well maintained. Don't use hand-me-downs if they are not the right size.
- Have the proper equipment: Skis and poles need to be sized according to the skier's height and ability. Boots should be the right size. Ask for help when buying the equipment to ensure you have the right size.
- Before the first run of the year, have your bindings checked by a professional to ensure they work properly.
- Wear sunscreen to protect exposed skin and ski goggles or sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- Wear windproof and waterproof clothing. It can get very chilly on the top of a slope.
- Wear multiple layers of lightweight clothing, so articles can be taken off, or added as conditions or exertion levels change.

Responsible skiing and boarding

- Stretch and warm up before your activity.
- Always stay with a buddy – never go it alone.
- Only ski, snowboard or sled on hills that are appropriate for your ability.
- ***Follow the Skier's Responsibility Code:***
  - ✓ Always stay in control, and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.
  - ✓ People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.
  - ✓ Do not stop where you obstruct a trail, or are not visible from above.
  - ✓ Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others.
  - ✓ Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.
  - ✓ Observe and obey all posted signs and warnings.
  - ✓ Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
  - ✓ Ensure you have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely prior to using any lift.

Make sure to take lessons, follow the rules of the slopes, and avoid risky behaviour, then you are on the right track to having a fun, injury free day on the slopes. Know your limits before you set off on a winter adventure. Remember, if you are tired – take a rest, if you are cold – go inside and get a warm drink!

CSC UPDATE :

Canada Safety Council files lawsuit against CAPSC Safety Services Nova Scotia to protect intellectual property rights.

The Canada Safety Council (CSC) has filed a lawsuit against CAPSC (Canadian Association of Provincial Safety Councils) Safety Services Nova Scotia, charging the named defendant with infringement and violation of the CSC's rights under the Copyright Act.

The suit, filed in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, alleges that the defendant willfully misappropriated the CSC's motorcycle safety and training curriculum materials in connection with the development and publication of (CAPSC's) Motorcycle Training Canada curriculum materials, and prepared derivative works based on the CSC's copyrighted curricula. It also appears that other members of (CAPSC) may be implicated and CSC will move early this year to protect the assets of CSC.

The suit seeks to permanently stop the defendants from using the Motorcycle Training Canada materials, or any other product that infringes upon the CSC's copyrights, as well as from marketing or offering the Motorcycle Training Canada program and from making any false endorsement suggestion.

"The Canada Safety Council attempted to resolve these issues without a lawsuit, but Safety Services Nova Scotia was unwilling to discuss the issue and or to stop their unlawful conduct," points out Jack Smith, President of CSC. "After CAPSC began attempting to market, distribute and offer the Motorcycle Training Canada curriculum materials to motorcycle safety programs across the country, it became clear the CSC had no choice but to take legal action to protect its intellectual property rights."

Canada Safety Council has worked with all provinces and territories in Canada in connection with motorcycle safety training and policy for more than 35 years, and continues to support motorcyclists in Nova Scotia. In fact, while maintaining copyright jurisdiction, CSC granted permission to Manitoba Transportation, now Manitoba Public Insurance, to use content from CSC's Motorcycle Student and Instructor Manuals to provide information and to establish provincial standards for motorcycle training.

"This is the first time in its history that CSC has initiated this sort of legal action," Smith said. "We much prefer to focus on our mission and making motorcycling safer and more enjoyable. But if an organization does not protect its intellectual property rights, it can lose them. The CSC does not object to another entity developing a different learning to ride curriculum. However, the CSC does take issue with anyone who takes a shortcut by misappropriating the CSC's curriculum and misrepresenting it as its own."

Canada Safety Council has been developing and maintaining quality, research-based rider education and training curricula to best meet the safety-related needs and interests of the motorcycling community for more than 35 years. The CSC invests significantly in the scope, quality and continuous improvement of its rider education and training systems, applying years of experience and the intellectual rigour of experts in motorcycle training and educational best practices. Our program is the widest of its kind used in Canada and has been since 1974.

The Canada Safety Council has set internationally recognized standards that promote the safety of motorcyclists with course, testing and public information. As a charitable, not-for-profit organization we enjoy the support of business, the motorcycle manufacturers, government and Canadian motorcycle riders. The mission is to make motorcycling safer and more enjoyable by ensuring access to lifelong quality education and training for prospective riders and those who already enjoy the activity. We constantly advocate for a safer riding experience and environment.

More than 500 thousand motorcyclists have taken CSC's *Gearing Up* rider training courses.

As a not-for-profit, non-government organization, the Council draws upon the dedication and commitment of its directors, committee members and instructors. Contributions from corporate and individual members enable a small professional staff to maintain programming and respond to inquiries from the public, professionals, the media and others.

HOME SAFETY :

Carbon Monoxide

As the colder weather starts to settle in, people use fuel-burning appliances more frequently in order to keep themselves warm. People need to be extremely vigilant when using these appliances to prevent deadly exposure to the serious hazards of carbon monoxide (CO).

Carbon monoxide is often called the "silent killer" – its victims cannot see it, smell it or taste it. It is an invisible, odourless gas that can poison, and even kill you. Breathing in carbon monoxide can make you feel sick, and feel as if you have the flu. You may experience headaches, nausea, dizziness and shortness of breath. People most at risk are infants, small children, pregnant women, elderly people, and people with heart or lung problems.

Carbon monoxide gas is produced by the incomplete burning of fuels. It can be released by gas furnaces, hot water heaters, cars, fireplaces, wood stoves and kerosene heaters. Faulty burners or clogged chimneys are often part of the problem. To avoid the production of CO, you should have your chimney, furnace and gas-fired appliances checked by professional technicians every year.

In Ontario alone, from 2001 to 2007, there have been 74 accidental deaths from asphyxia due to vehicle exhaust and furnace fumes. In 2008, the London Fire Department responded to over 800 calls from people whose CO alarms sounded or who suspected they might have been exposed. In many cases, fire crews found dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

A carbon monoxide detector is the best way to protect you and your family from this potentially deadly threat. Install CO alarms where they can be easily heard, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. When installing a CO alarm, always follow the manufacturer's instructions. Test CO alarms at least once a month and replace batteries according to manufacturer's instructions.

To reduce the chances of you or a loved one getting carbon monoxide poisoning, follow these tips:

- Eliminate CO at the source. Make the maintenance of your furnace, fireplace, and all fuel-burning appliances an absolute priority. Have them checked and cleaned each year.
- Install a certified carbon monoxide alarm in your home and check it regularly to make sure the battery is working.
- Know the symptoms of CO poisoning. If they appear, it is important to get everyone, including pets, outside to fresh air immediately.
- Never heat your home with a gas stove.
- Never use a barbeque, charcoal or hibachi grill in the home or in an enclosed area.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of snow.
- Never use a gas-powered generator inside your home.

If your CO alarm sounds, make sure to get out of your home immediately and call 911 from a safe place.

PUBLIC SAFETY :

Snow Blowin' Time!

With Canadian winters, comes snowfall after snowfall. People may turn to snow blowers to help clear snow from their property. Snow blowers can indeed make snow removal easier and more efficient particularly where there is a large area to clear. If you use a snow blower it is also important to recognize that this machine does not make snow removal either effortless or risk-free.

Most snow blower injuries are caused by reaching into the discharge chute or the auger to remove a clog. When heavy, wet snow or other debris clogs the blower, shut off the machine then disengage the clutch. Wait five seconds to allow the blades to stop rotating, and then use a solid object, such as a stick or a broom handle, to remove the obstruction. Never use your hand to unblock a jam. Even after the snow blower engine is turned off, an auger can rotate unexpectedly when the cause of the jam is removed, taking your hand with it. The injuries can range from severe cuts, to crushed or broken bones, to finger amputations (two-thirds of injuries involve fingers).

Follow these safety tips to ensure safe practices when using your snow blower this winter:

- Buy a machine approved by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), and thoroughly read and understand the owner's manual before operating your snow blower.
- Never clear snow out of the auger with your hand. Use an appropriately sized solid object, like a stick, to remove any snow jam.
- Never add fuel to the gas tank when the engine is running or hot, add it before you start the machine.
- Always push, never pull, a snow blower. If you stumble while pulling it, the machine could land on you.
- Dress properly for the job. Be sure to wear adequate winter clothing and footwear that will improve footing on slippery surfaces. Avoid any loose fitting clothing, such as long scarves, that could get caught in moving parts.
- Gravel can become a dangerous projectile when fired from a snow blower's exhaust chute. Leave a ground clearance of 2.5 centimetres when clearing snow from an area of gravel or crushed rock.
- Shut off the snow blower when you are not using it. It only takes a few seconds for a child to be injured by an unattended machine.
- Clear area of anything that could get caught in the snow blower.
- Keep children and pets at a safe distance.
- Make sure that there is always somebody nearby in case of an accident.

Always keep safety in mind when dealing with snow removal. Concentrate on what you are doing, and always be aware of your surroundings.

KWIZ KORNER :

Put a Lid on it!

Questions:

1. **What percentage of skiing and snowboarding deaths has been caused by a head injury?**
   a. 46.5 per cent
   b. 52.5 per cent
   c. 87.5 per cent
   d. 91.5 per cent

2. **Children and adolescents have more head and neck injuries than adults.**
   True or False

3. **How effective are ski and snowboard helmets at preventing brain damage?**
   a. 20 per cent effective
   b. 40 per cent effective
   c. 60 per cent effective
   d. 80 per cent effective

4. **As long as you wear a helmet on the ski hills, it doesn't matter how it fits.**
   True or False

5. **Using a second-hand helmet is perfectly safe.**
   True or False

6. **I can use a ski/snowboard helmet for tobogganing.**
   True or False

Answers

1. **C** - An international review, including Canada, determined that head injuries are the most common cause of death among skiers and snowboarders. While head injuries have only been shown to comprise three to 15 per cent of all injuries suffered by skiers and snowboarders, 87.5 per cent of skiing and snowboarding deaths have been caused by a head injury.

2. **True** - This vulnerability could be due to underdeveloped muscles and bones, which may contribute to children falling more. Also, children may often wear ski equipment that is too big or too small because they grow from one ski season to the next, which can contribute to more falls.

3. **C** - Ski helmets are designed to resist impact. They cannot prevent all head injuries, but it can significantly reduce your risk of a head injury when worn correctly. A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 2006, showed that helmets used for skiing and snowboarding are associated with 60 per cent reduction in head injuries.

4. **False** - It is very important that your helmet fits properly, and that it is secured correctly. Your helmet should be snug and comfortable, and should sit two fingers above the eyebrow, only one finger under the chinstrap. The inside pads should touch your cheeks and forehead and the back should not touch the nape of your neck. If you are wearing goggles, there should be little or no gap between the top of the goggles and the helmet. Most helmets come with fitting instructions to help you. If your helmet is dropped or you have been in a fall or collision while wearing it, you should replace it.

5. **False** - For safety reasons, it is not a good idea to buy a helmet second-hand. You may not know if the helmet has been in a crash, or how old it is. A helmet that has been in a crash should not be relied on to protect you from head injury. A helmet should be replaced if it is more than five years old. Also, older helmets may not meet current safety standards, or they may have missing or broken parts.

6. **True** - A ski/snowboarding helmet can be used for tobogganing. Since the activity of going downhill and the causes of injury are similar between these activities, a ski/ snowboarding helmet is your best choice. Look for a certified ski/ snowboard helmet approved by ASTM (American) or CE (European) when buying a helmet. The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) released a new standard for a multi-impact ski and snowboard helmet; however, no helmets are available for sale with the CSA seal at this time.

Safety How To's...

...Safely dispose of CFL bulbs.

More and more people are switching to Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) bulbs from traditional light bulbs because they reduce energy use at home and prevent greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. There have been some concerns on the small amounts of mercury present in CFL bulbs, and how to dispose of them properly.

If a bulb breaks...

- Breakages, though deserving of caution, can usually be cleaned up inexpensively with household goods.
- Open windows and doors so you quickly ventilate the room.
- Get all the people and pets out of the room for 15 minutes and let the room air out.
- Do not touch the broken glass with bare hands. Larger pieces of the bulb should be picked up with gloves. Use duct tape to pick up smaller fragments.
- If it breaks on a hard surface, wipe down the area with a damp paper towel or a wet wipe.
- All materials should be placed in a sealable plastic bag or, even better, in a glass jar with a metal lid, then disposed of.

To dispose of a used (or broken) bulb...

- CFL bulbs should not be disposed with regular household waste. Canadians can now bring in their expired CFLs to any *The Home Depot* store, where each bulb will be recycled safely.
- At each Home Depot store, customers will find a CFL recycling unit located at the entrance by the special services desk. Customers can bring in their expired CFLs, place them in one of the plastic bags provided, seal the bag and deposit it into the display.
- Each store monitors the unit and, once full, sends the expired CFLs to be responsibly recycled.

...Prepare an emergency winter car kit.

Making one is easy, inexpensive and quick – and it could save your life. Your emergency car kit should contain adequate supplies to keep you safe and self-sufficient for an extended period of time in the event you become stranded in your car. Try to keep your vehicle's gas tank at least half-full at all times, and always have a fully charged cell phone with you. Assemble the following items in an easy to carry case and store it in your trunk.

- Ice scraper and brush
- Flashlight
- Extra hats, mitts and footwear
- First aid kit
- Lightweight shovel
- Road maps
- Booster cables
- Sand (or kitty litter)
- Blankets
- Waterproof matches
- Flares
- Food bars (granola, chocolate, etc.)

...Stay on your feet this winter

With the colder weather comes ice and slippery situations. By taking a few simple precautions, you can make it safer to walk outdoors in the winter. Removing snow and ice, putting sand or salt on areas where people walk, and wearing the right footwear all make a big difference.

- Wear a good pair of winter boots that are well insulated and have a thin, non-slip tread sole.
- Wipe your feet before entering a building.
- Take short steps when walking on snow or ice.
- Pay attention to where you are walking, and slow down on slippery surfaces.
- If you come across some ice, loosen your body and spread your feet apart to provide a base of support and stabilize you as you walk.
- If you find youself going down and can't recover, try to roll with the fall and avoid sticking your arms out to break the fall.
- Be especially careful when getting on and off buses.
- Remember that walking while impaired can also be hazardous. Always walk with friends after a night at the bar.

Safety Canada

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