

SafetyCanada

THE MEMBER NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADA SAFETY COUNCIL

JANUARY 2016

VOL. LX No. 1

Shovelling Doesn't Have to be a Pain in the Back



Winter snowfalls bring a mixed bag of emotions. Children get excited for the possibility of snowball fights, snowmen and snow angels. Teenagers become hopeful that a snow day might cancel classes.

For adults, although that youthful mirth might still be present, it's too often replaced with the feeling of dread, of bad road conditions and of back pain from all the heavy shovelling being done.

Despite its status as a universally disliked chore, shovelling out a driveway is a necessary evil. But that doesn't mean it has to be a pain in the back — metaphorically or literally. Back injuries are easily preventable by taking a few precautions when you're moving the snow around.

Here are a few helpful tips to keep you free of strain and limit your odds of dealing with a long-term injury:

Use the right shovel for the job. In most cases, your best bet is a wide lightweight pusher-type shovel. Snow can sometimes accumulate on metal shovels, so either spray them with Teflon before use or stick with a plastic shovel.

If the weather forecast is calling for a prolonged period of snowfall, don't wait for it all to build up. Shovel frequently. It may be disheartening to see your handiwork filled in with snow so quickly after finishing, but smaller loads at a time will put less strain on your muscles in the long run. *Continued on page 3*

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President's Perspective

Starting on Jan. 1, 2015, motorists in Alberta will be facing stiffer penalties when it comes to distracted driving. And with its new law, Alberta becomes the 10th and final province in Canada that hands out demerit points for the offence.

Anyone caught either using a hand-held device — including cell phones, laptops, video games, cameras and GPS devices — or reading, writing or grooming will receive three demerit points on their licence, along with the standard \$287 fine.

Alberta joins Ontario and British Columbia in being the only progressive provinces that ban hand-held electronic entertainment devices such as portable DVD players and game consoles.

As it stands, fines across Canada range from \$115 on the lower end to \$1,200 at the higher end, with between three and five demerit points being handed out depending on the province. Nunavut remains the only province or territory not to have any distracted driving laws in effect.

It's a very positive sign that laws around the country are getting more severe and carrying harsher penalties. Distracted driving is a factor in approximately 4 million motor vehicle

crashes in North America per year. The fact of the matter is that even one crash as a result of distracted driving is one too many.

This legislation is a positive step, as we're seeing distracted driving continue to take a spot at the forefront of the discussion surrounding safety for motorists. But legislation is only one part of the equation. And while it serves as a useful deterrent, the responsibility falls on you and your fellow Canadian drivers to operate your vehicle safely.

Wake up a bit earlier so you don't feel obligated to groom or eat while driving. Program the GPS and tune the radio before leaving. And if you absolutely have to use the phone, pull over when it's safe to do so and stop your vehicle first.

Safety, it's an attitude!



Jack Smith, President



Looking Ahead



The newest members of the Canada Safety Council's instructor team were trained in mid-December. This new crop of eight Professional Driver Improvement Course instructors join the three pre-existing instructors at the Ontario Truck Training Academy in Oshawa, Ont., the training school with the most PDIC trainers in Canada.

With a total of 11 instructors, the O.T.T.A. is now the training school with the most PDIC instructors in Canada. Congratulations! To find out more about the program or for information about becoming a PDIC instructor, please contact the Canada Safety Council at (613) 739-1535 ext. 233, or by email at csc@safety-council.org.

March 14-20 is **National Farm Safety Week**. This year's campaign will focus on how to best prevent any form of repetitive strain injuries, efficient techniques to lift heavy loads such as bales of hay, and steps farmers can take to make their workload lighter and less likely to result in injury.

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The immediate temptation is always to throw the snow away from your driveway, but you should concentrate on pushing it to the side of the path instead.

Pushing limits the chances of any sudden jerking or twisting movements that might throw out your back and takes less effort while achieving the same ends.

As with any kind of lifting and shoving, the primary focus should be on bending your knees, and

not your back, to gain leverage. Your knees are designed to absorb the added weight. Your back is not.

Lastly, take breaks. If you find yourself short of breath or sore in the arms, stop shovelling. Stretch. If you feel any kind of pain in your back, neck or chest, stop immediately.

Take the necessary precautions and you'll avoid putting yourself in the chiropractor's office — or worse, the hospital — this winter.

Use Your Hoverboard Safely

You might have seen them by now — hoverboards are slowly filtering their way into the day-to-day hustle and bustle in some cities.

The two-wheeled motorized devices work like a cross between a skateboard and a motorized scooter, with some models allowing users to achieve speeds as high as 25 km/h by leaning forward or backward.

Because the law is more reactionary than proactive, legislation takes a while to introduce any new technology that breaks into the market.

But legislation isn't always the answer — and more often than not, can be avoided entirely with responsible operation, parental supervision and appropriate use.

With the holiday season behind us, you or somebody you know may have received a hoverboard as a gift. Before jumping on and going for a ride, though, there are some safety tips you should follow to keep yourself out of harm's way.

Wear a helmet and other protective equipment.

Especially if you drive regularly, 25 km/h may not seem particularly fast. But consider the fact that helmets on bicycles are mandatory in five provinces (with an additional three limiting the requirement to minors,) and the average speed of a commuting bicyclist is somewhere between 16 and 24 km/h.

Don't take any chances with your head — wear a helmet.

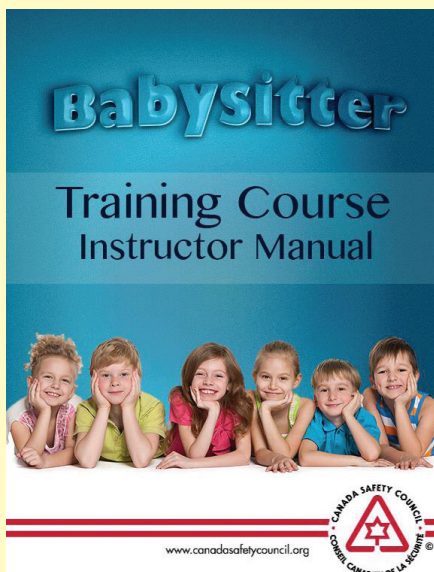


Another key element in keeping hoverboard use safe is ensuring that they're only being ridden in safe areas away from pedestrians. Keep them off public roadways and sidewalks.

Also, keep in mind that you are not legally allowed to drive hoverboards on major roads, as they are subject to the Highway Traffic Act. Ride them only on private grounds, and preferably on a level, flat surface.

Hoverboards provide a really neat window into future technological advancements and an interesting new way of getting around. But as with any other mode of transportation, there are risks involved.

Be smart, be safe.



New look for BTC, Home Alone manuals

New year, new look!

The Canada Safety Council's Babysitter Training Course and Home Alone Program manuals both underwent a redesign last year and will be ready to ship in early January.

In addition to the new look, the content has been modernized, including a brand new section on Internet Safety in the Home Alone Program.

For more information, visit our website at <http://www.canadasafetycouncil.org/training/youth>

Staying Fit for the New Year and Beyond

Safety and exercise should go together hand in hand. However, due to time constraints and a feeling that it's not necessary, warming up and preventative measures against injury are one of the first things to be abandoned when time is of the essence or for people who are new to the realm of fitness.

The trick to staying safe in any form of physical activity is to start slow and gradually ramp up the intensity. Your muscles aren't built to go from sedentary to super-strength in a matter of seconds. Make sure you take a few minutes before any kind of exercise to warm up, stretch and prepare your body for the workout to follow.

The right equipment will also go a long way toward keeping you safe.

First and foremost, invest in a pair of shoes that fit well and conform to your activity of choice. This holds especially true if you are a runner, but also as general all-purpose advice. Make sure your shoes have enough grip and are comfortable while walking and running.

Loose-fitting, lightweight cotton clothing or sweat-wicking fabric makes for the ideal workout clothes. Focus on function, not fashion. Along those lines, be sure you're using proper protective equipment as well. This can include a helmet for biking, knee and elbow pads for any high-impact activity or sport, and retro-reflective or bright clothing for any early or late outdoor activity.

Most of all, it's crucial that you don't push yourself too hard. If you find yourself experiencing unexpected pain, dizziness, faintness, cold sweats, muscle cramps or an irregular

heartbeat, slow down to a gradual stop. Take a break. Let your body recover.

Especially in the case of an irregular heartbeat, it's important not to stop suddenly. This can cause problems relating to blood circulation and fainting. In the case of sudden or severe pain, though, stop at once. It's more important that you seek help and check in with a doctor — continuing any form of physical exercise after discomfort of this nature could lead to longer-term injury and a long road to recovery.

While exercising, drink plenty of water. Hydration is a critical element of proper physical activity, and your performance will suffer if you don't ensure that you're getting the water you need.

The New Year often brings about many resolutions to work out, get in better shape and start living a healthier life. And that's great — especially when you consider that, according to the Canadian Health Measures Survey, only 20 per cent of Canadians are following the recommendation of at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week.

It's worth remembering, though, that New Year's resolutions often fall by the wayside when time becomes short. In these cases, fitness is usually one of the first resolutions to be dropped.

Make a concerted effort to not let that happen. Exercise and well-being is not a matter of finding the time — it's a matter of making the time. A proper exercise regime can provide many benefits, including advantages to your health, your mortality and your heart.

Whether you're running marathons, lifting weights at the gym, riding your bicycle to work or doing push-ups during commercial breaks, stay active. Do a little bit every day and you'll be a much healthier person for it.



Safe Communities Becoming a Priority

In recent years, the senior population has been increasing at a much more rapid pace in Canada than it has historically; this is largely because of the aging demographic of baby-boomers.

With the population growth among older Canadians continuing, communities in the country are beginning to adapt and become more senior-friendly. These changing communities are a definite positive step in an inclusionary society and will help support the health and well being of seniors.

But what exactly does an age-friendly community entail? The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) lists several aspects of what it means for a community to be senior-friendly.

1. Outdoors spaces and public buildings should be pleasant, safe and physically accessible.
2. Housing should be affordable and well-designed with seniors' needs in mind.
3. Accessibility and affordability should be key elements of public transportation.
4. Seniors should have opportunities to be socially active.
5. Roads and walkways are accessible, safe and in good condition.
6. The community respects its seniors and includes them in civic life.
7. Seniors can find volunteer, political

and employment positions that suit their interests and abilities.

8. Health and community support services are readily available, as is information.

These eight key features explain how an age-friendly community is easy to implement and how Canadians should be willing to put the changing needs of seniors at the forefront of community planning.

According to the PHAC, all ten Canadian provinces have promoted age-friendly initiatives in the past, and four Canadian cities were involved in the initial Global Age-Friendly Cities Project organized by the World Health Organization in 2006. These cities were Saanich, B.C., Portage la Prairie, Man., Sherbrooke, Que. and Halifax, N.S.

Seniors are an important part of the ever-changing mosaic of Canadian culture. Do your part to make the lives of seniors around you easier, whether it involves shovelling a sidewalk to keep it clear, spending time with an elder you know or any of the other thousands of ways to show that the seniors in your community are valued and appreciated.

A shift toward senior-centered community development will be beneficial not only for the growing senior population in the country, but also for the overall safety and well being of all residents in the communities.

After all, safe neighbourhoods and well-maintained roadways benefit us all.



Safety Training Online

Want to go back to school without leaving home?

Visit www.canadasafetycouncil.org/training

to sign up for online safety training! Courses include OH&S topics, defensive driving, babysitters training, and home alone safety.

Give Winter Illnesses the Cold Shoulder

The relatively calm early winter may have lulled you into a false sense of security, but don't be fooled — flu season is unfortunately alive and well.

And while the virus spreads quickly and efficiently, there are plenty of things you can do to keep yourself uninfected and healthy.

Firstly, get the flu shot every year. It's proven to be one of the most effective ways of fighting off the spread of germs.

You cannot catch the flu from getting the shot, as the vaccine is made with either inactive flu virus, which cannot infect, or with no flu virus at all.

Keep a distance between yourself and people who have fallen ill, but also be sure to wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your mouth or eyes.

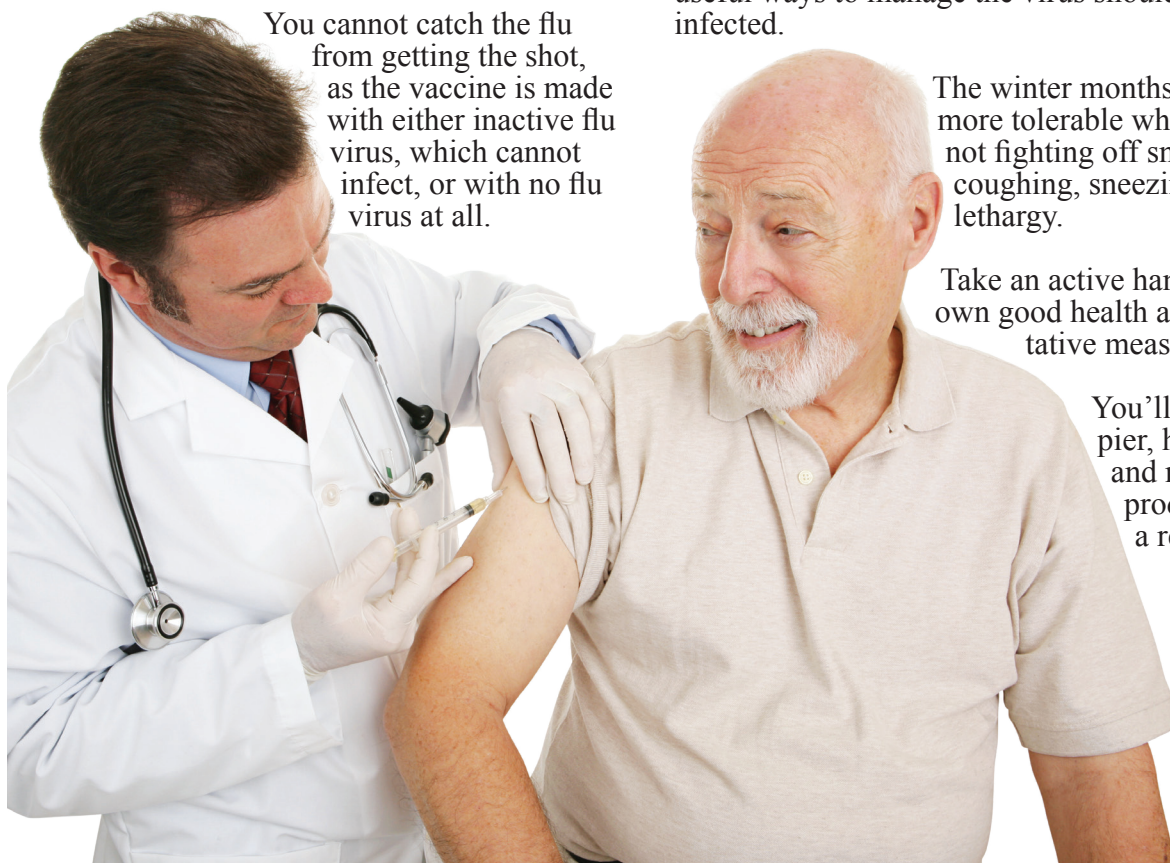
The disease spreads through droplets caused by the infected person sneezing, blowing their nose or wiping their eyes.

Rest, hydration, vitamins C and E and regular exercise are all effective ways of staving off the virus as well, with the first three also being useful ways to manage the virus should you get infected.

The winter months are a lot more tolerable when you're not fighting off sniffles, coughing, sneezing and lethargy.

Take an active hand in your own good health and preventative measures.

You'll be happier, healthier and more productive as a result.



Popular on Social Media

Canada Safety Council
Published by Hootsuite (?) · 16 December at 09:11 · 🌐

On the road a lot? Here are some tips to reduce your chances of injury from poor driving posture: <http://ow.ly/VRDvC>

109 people reached Boost Post

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Richard Devitt What about headrests? In today's vehicles, they slant forward at a sharp angle to prevent against whiplash. However, in my experience, this can force one's neck forward into a head slouch, which cannot be good for posture.
Like · Reply · Message · 16 December at 12:59

Canada Safety Council You're absolutely correct — many headrests do jut out at sharp angles to cradle the head and prevent whiplash. In most cases, the kind of head slouch you're referring to is only seen when the headrest isn't properly adjusted.
Headrests should be level with the top of the head and 5 to 10 cm from the back of the head. More often than not, the head slouch comes when the top of the headrest is too low, not as a result of poor design.
Like · Reply · 16 December at 13:22

CanadaSafetyCouncil @CanadaSafetyCSC · Dec 17

Dictating a text-msg or email can impair driving more than talking on a hand-held cell. #justdrive Via @AAASafety

MENTAL DISTRACTION RATING SYSTEM

Even with your eyes on the road and your hands on the wheel, mental distractions dangerously affect drivers behind the wheel.

Mild Danger	Moderate Danger	High Danger
Example: Listening to the radio or an audio book	Example: Talking on a hand-held phone or a hands-free phone	Example: Using voice-activated texting or email features

TO SUBSCRIBE: AAA.com/distraction

CanadaSafetyCouncil @CanadaSafetyCSC · Dec 14

Here are some #safetytips to ensure a happy holiday this year #CanadaSafety ow.ly/d/46QL

1) Practice safe food handling

- Thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables before serving them.
- Avoid cross-contamination of prepared food with raw food. There's no need to rinse poultry before cooking (that just splashes germs everywhere). Blot dry your bird with a paper towel.
- Use a meat thermometer to ensure you're cooking meat to the right temperature.

2) Prevent falls

- Ensure walks are promptly cleared of snow and ice. Purchase and use plenty of sand/salt for the task.
- Mind the ladder while you decorate and move items to and from storage. Use ladders on dry, sturdy, flat surfaces and maintain your centre of balance. Avoid storing bulky, heavy items up high.
- Keep hallways and stairs well-lit and free of clutter.

3) Don't get burned in the kitchen

- Don't leave grilling, frying or broiling unattended. Keep cooking surfaces clutter-free.
- Order in if intoxicated.

4) Mind the kids

- Keep guests' purses and bags out of reach.
- Ensure clear communication about who's supervising and when.
- If you have very small children, avoid decorating with glass ornaments and tiny ornaments that could present choking hazards.
- Buy gifts that are age appropriate.

*Do you have a safety story, tip or pet-peeve to share?
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