

Safety Canada

THE MEMBER NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADA SAFETY COUNCIL

Safe Storage: The Key to Firearm Safety at Home

By Ethel Archard

In June of this year, some children in Cranbrook, B.C. were playing around with a shotgun owned by one of their parents, when a 10-year-old boy accidentally shot and killed a 17-year-old boy.

A child playing with a loaded gun and inadvertently shooting a playmate is a parent's worst nightmare. Some three per cent of firearms deaths are unintentional, with many of the victims being children, followed by hunters and sport shooters. In 72 per cent of the cases involving children, the firearm belonged to a household member, relative, friend or friend's parent.

"The best way to protect children from unintentional shootings is to keep your firearms unloaded and securely locked up when they are not in use," advises Canada Safety Council president Jack Smith. Firearms should be locked in a steel cabinet, safe or vault designed for

that purpose. Keep the keys to your firearms and ammunition in a secure location.

Most gun-related deaths and injuries in the home environment are self-inflicted or connected with domestic problems. In fact, most gun-related deaths and injuries occur in the home environment.

In many parts of Canada, especially rural areas, firearm ownership is relatively high. Rifles and shot guns kept in the home are used for hunting and sports shooting, as well as to protect livestock and crops. These firearm-related deaths and injuries – by and large not reported in the media – are more likely to happen in these areas than in urban areas.

Dr. Alan Drummond is an emergency physician and coroner in the small, idyllic rural community of Perth, Ontario. He has seen his share of injuries and deaths inflicted by rifles and shotguns.

"These casualties have involved people who seemed quite normal, but an unsafely stored long gun was readily available," says Dr. Drummond, who works with the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians to address this issue. "Suicide, contrary to public opinion, is often an impulsive act, and in the assaults and murders I have seen that have involved guns, the perpetrators also acted on impulse."

A great concern is the number of gun suicides in Canada, particularly among Canada's Aboriginal communities where hunting is a way of life. Having firearms in a home environment adds to the risk, particularly if they are left out in the open.

"Hunting and gathering is our way of life and will continue to be for generations to come," explains Vera Pawis

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President's Perspective

As the weather begins to change, the need to prepare your home for winter arises. Autumn chores can be physically demanding – performing strenuous activities such as raking and bagging leaves. This is similar to the seasonal exertion brought about by shovelling snow. Working vigorously to get these chores done, before the cold sets in, can take a toll on your body.

Autumn yard chores from raking leaves to cleaning out eavestroughs include twisting, reaching, bending, lifting and carrying and can lead to falls or strain to your back and upper body. It is essential to take precautions with all these activities to help prevent injuries.



Always use extension ladders with care. Reliable sources claim that the highest number of hospitalizations from misuse of ladders occurs in the months of October and November. Inspect ladders for loose screws, hinges or rungs. Place ladders on firm, level surfaces and do not climb too high or stretch over to one side causing the ladder to tilt. Keep your body centered and maintain a firm grip.

Follow these tips to help avoid injury:

- Warm up for at least 10 minutes with some stretching and light exercise.
- Use a rake that's comfortable for your height and strength. You can prevent blisters by wearing gloves or using a rake with a padded handle.
- Wear shoes or boots with slip-resistant soles.
- Take it easy. To avoid muscle aches and pains, pace yourself and take breaks. If you experience chest pain or shortness of breath, seek medical attention.
- Vary your movements and alternate your leg and arm positions often. When picking up leaves, bend at the knees, not at the waist.
- Don't overfill leaf bags, especially if the leaves are wet. You should be able to carry bags comfortably.
- If you are an allergy-sufferer, consider wearing a dust mask to filter out allergens, moulds and other contaminants. Avoid burning piles of leaves and avoid bringing your work clothes into the house. Remove and wash immediately.

Safety, It's an Attitude

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack Smith'.

Jack Smith, President

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The Facebook logo, consisting of the word 'facebook' in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

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Tabobondung, President of the National Association of Friendship Centres.

"Since the days of the traditional bow and arrow of long ago, to today's use of firearms, the safe use and storage of these hunting tools must be practiced within the Aboriginal home and community at all times," she continues. "As a grandmother, I encourage Aboriginal people young and old to remember to use firearms for what they were meant for – to sustain life by providing for your family and your community. Respect your firearms and keep them securely locked up when they're not in use. Protect what is sacred to us all, life."

The majority of owners use their firearms for hunting, target or sport shooting and collecting. Most Canadian firearms owners have rifles or shotguns, with only 12 per cent owning handguns. Canadians who want to own a firearm have to take the Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC) and pass the tests, or challenge and pass the CFSC tests if they don't take the course. For restricted firearms, an additional course is required.

Terry Pratt teaches these courses in the Ottawa area. Part of the course deals with how to store firearms safely in the home. "The firearm must be unloaded and rendered inoperable," he says.

"Remove the bolt or bolt carrier, or use a trigger lock, or a cable lock, depending on the firearm action. These locks can be cheap or expensive, with either keyed or combination lock. Personally I prefer the combination lock." He stresses that firearms should be trigger locked and placed in a locked gun case, a gun safe or a room specially built for the storage of firearms.

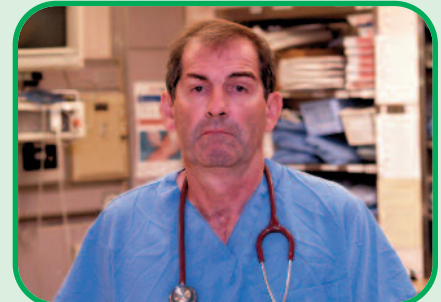
Colette Bellavance, General Manager of the Saskatchewan Association for Firearm Education (SAFE) agrees that safety measures must be followed at all times when dealing with firearms. "Always unload your firearm when it's not in use, never have a loaded firearm in a vehicle and when returning to a vehicle or camp after hunting, unload your firearm away from the vehicle or camp. Remember, 80 per cent of all firearm accidents happen within 10 meters of the muzzle. So always think safety first!"

SAFE is a non-profit association of firearm safety and hunter educators, and others with a common purpose of promoting safe, ethical hunting as a worthwhile way of life and the shooting sports as safe, respectable forms of recreation.

If you have firearms in your home, or if your family members visit the homes of friends who do, make sure safe storage practices are in place.

Firearm Safety Tips for the Home

- Ensure firearms are unloaded at all times when stored.
- Lock the firearms in a cabinet, safe or room that was built or modified specifically to store firearms safely. Make sure the structure is difficult to break into.
- Attach a secure locking device, such as a trigger lock or cable lock (or remove the bolt) so the gun or rifle cannot be fired.
- Store ammunition separately and lock it up. While ammunition can be stored in the same container as the firearm, it should be locked up separately. Again, make sure it is difficult to break into.
- Children must not have access to the keys used to lock up firearms and ammunition. Always keep them in a secure and safe place.



Dr. Alan Drummond, of the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, says that in his rural community most firearm deaths and injuries are due to an impulsive act in a home where an unsafely stored gun is readily available.

WHEELS IN MOTION

Proper tire inflation is key to road safety

When was the last time you checked your tire pressure? Perhaps it was during your last oil change or trip to the service bay. What you may not know is that tires need to be inspected far more frequently than your vehicle may require regular service. Sadly, many Canadian drivers are unaware of this important fact and as a result, put themselves and other road users at risk by driving on neglected tires.

A recent study shows that about 50 per cent of vehicles on Canadian roads have at least one tire that is either over – or underinflated. Either of these situations can reduce the life of your tires, create an unsafe driving condition, increase fuel costs and harmful emissions as well as increase your chances of a breakdown or collision.

To find the recommended tire inflation pressure for your vehicle's tires, refer to the tire information label, which is usually located inside the edge of the driver's door. If you can't find the information label, check your owner's manual.

Transport Canada has produced a handy pamphlet called "Riding on Air – Critical safety and environmental information for you and your tires" which can be downloaded at www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety. It has everything you need for safe and economical ways to operate and maintain your tires.

An important reminder—2011 is Canada's Year of Road Safety, so why not re-think road safety?

www.newscanada.com

WHEELS IN MOTION

Fuel-Efficient Driving Tips

Your driving habits – when and where you drive, how often, the speed you travel, your aggressiveness on the road and other factors – have a lot to do with your vehicle's fuel consumption and costs.

You can control the costs of operating a vehicle and minimize the emissions it produces by making a commitment to drive less and to drive more efficiently.

TRACK YOUR FUEL CONSUMPTION: By tracking your fuel consumption, you can monitor how many kilometers you get out of a tank of fuel. Using fuel-efficient driving practises can increase the distance you travel for every tank. To find out how much fuel your vehicle uses, register today to use Natural Resources Canada's online fuel consumption calculator at www.myfueluse.nrcan.gc.ca.

REDUCE YOUR SPEED: Decreasing your speed from 120 km/h to 100 km/h uses 20 per cent less fuel. Follow the speed limit and use cruise control on flat highway terrain to prevent inadvertent speeding and, in many cases, help save fuel by keeping your speed constant.

DON'T DRIVE AGGRESSIVELY: When combined, speeding, quick acceleration and hard stops – all considered aggressive driving – can increase fuel consumption by 25 per cent. Driving smoothly is safer and more fuel-efficient.

USE AIR CONDITIONING SPARINGLY: Due to the extra load on the engine, air conditioning can increase your vehicle's fuel consumption by up to 20 per cent. Where possible, use your vehicle's flow-through ventilation on the highway, or open a window when city driving.

LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD: The added weight of heavy items in your trunk and the decreased efficiency of your vehicle's aerodynamics caused by roof or bicycle racks contribute to increased fuel consumption. Lighten your load by carrying only what you need.

MEASURE YOUR TIRE PRESSURE AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH: Properly inflated tires last longer, make your vehicle safer to drive and save fuel. Inflate cold tires to the recommended pressure, which is usually indicated near or on the driver's door, in the glove compartment or in the owner's manual.

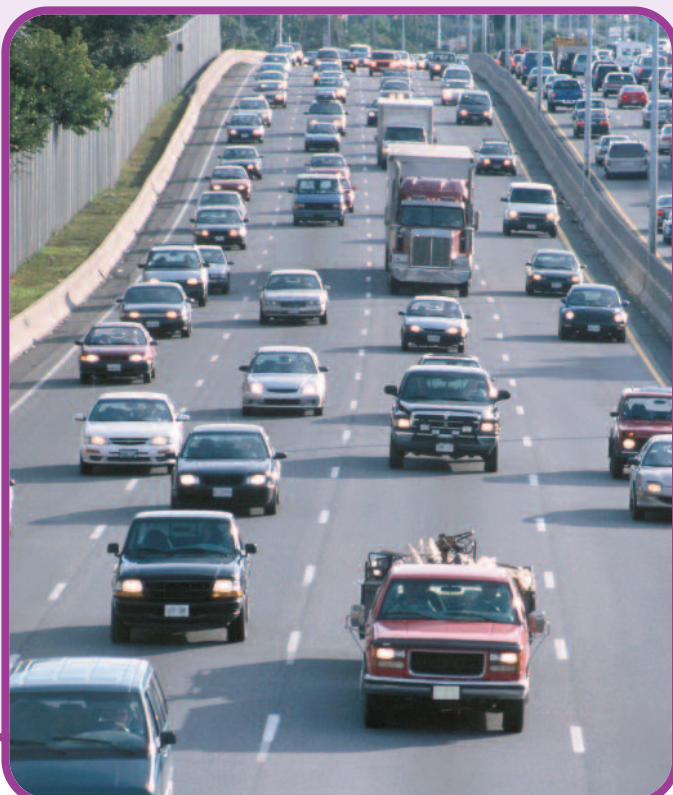
PLAN AND COMBINE TRIPS: Plan in advance to avoid rush hour or construction zones and save time on the road. Also, combine trips into one outing to save time, fuel and money. Trips of less than five kilometres do not allow the engine to reach its peak operating temperature, which means fuel consumption and exhaust emissions will be significantly higher than when covering the same distance with a warm engine.

AVOID UNNECESSARY IDLING: If you're stopped for more than 60 seconds, except while in traffic, turn off your engine. This has minimal impact on the starter system, and idling for more than 10 seconds uses more fuel than it takes to restart your vehicle. Unnecessary idling for 10 minutes a day uses about 5 per cent more fuel over the year.

SERVICE YOUR VEHICLE REGULARLY: Consult your owner's manual to learn about the proper care and maintenance of your vehicle. Follow the service recommendations and change the air filter, spark plugs, engine oil and other fluids accordingly to ensure you get optimum performance and fuel efficiency. A poorly maintained vehicle uses more fuel and creates more emissions.

USE PUBLIC TRANSIT OR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION WHENEVER POSSIBLE: Do you have a short errand to run? Consider walking, biking or using public transit. Using these alternatives immediately reduces both your fuel costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

Source: *Auto\$mart Thinking, Natural Resources Canada, Office of Energy Efficiency*



HEALTH SMARTS

Five Foods that Sabotage your Sleep

If you're having trouble sleeping, what about a midnight snack? It can be a good idea. But be careful to avoid these five foods that can hinder you from getting a good night's rest:

1. Preserved and smoked meats.

Slap your hand away when it reaches to make a ham sandwich as an evening snack. Ham, bacon, sausages, and smoked meats contain high levels of the amino acid tyramine, which triggers the brain to release norepinephrine, a brain stimulant that makes us feel alert and wired.

2. Chocolate.

Love an evening cup of cocoa? That sundae in front of the TV? Be careful of chocolate in all its disguises. Many people are increasingly sensitive to caffeine as they get older, and even the little chocolate chunks in chocolate chip ice cream could zap you just enough to prevent ZZZs. Chocolate also contains tyrosine, a stimulating amino acid.

3. Energy drinks.

Red Bull and other energy drinks are high in caffeine as well as the amino acid taurine, which boosts alertness and adrenaline. Recent studies have shown that even if you drink energy

drinks early in the day, the combined high dosage of taurine and caffeine can make it hard to sleep, or to sleep well, later on.

4. Tomato sauce, chili, pizza, and spicy foods.

Digestive disturbances are a common source of sleep problems, but many people fail to make the connection. Acidic and spicy foods can cause reflux, heartburn, and other symptoms that interrupt sleep.

5. The nightcap.

A drink or two may make you feel more relaxed after dinner, but it comes back to haunt you—literally—a few hours later, by preventing you from achieving deep sleep. And because alcohol both dehydrates you and makes you have to go to the bathroom, it wakes you up, too. Wine is high in the stimulant tyrosine as well.

Source: The Family Caregiver Newsmagazine



PUBLIC SAFETY

Ornge: In it for life

For most Canadians, safety is a daily consideration: we follow road signs and speed limits to prevent driving accidents, look before we leap into unfamiliar activities and territories, and take precautionary measures both at work and in our personal lives to reduce the risk of accidents and tragedies befalling ourselves and our families. The reality of life, however, is that safety can only go so far: accidents can happen in the blink of an eye, even when safety is taken into consideration. Precautions cannot always prevent tragedies, and in emergency situations, emergency services are a critical part of providing safe and effective care to those involved.

It is for this reason that Ornge is an essential part of the Ontario healthcare system. Ornge is the crucial link between patients and hospitals throughout the province of Ontario, providing medical transportation for over 21,000 critically ill and injured patients each year who require a specialized level of medical care.

Ornge is a not-for-profit organization that was mandated by the provincial government in 2006 to provide a fully integrated medical transport service for Ontario residents. Performing inter-facility hospital transfers, on-scene accident response, and the transportation of organ-retrieval teams, Ornge medical teams are available 24/7, 365 days a year to respond to the needs of patients across the province.

By combining two of the world's most highly regulated industries – aviation and medicine – Ornge provides seamless access to healthcare for Ontario's patients. Operating state-of-the-art "mobile ICU's" – medically equipped airplanes, helicopters, and critical care land ambulances – from twelve bases throughout the province,



Ornge paramedics, paediatric transport nurses and transport medicine physicians provide patients with the same level of medical care en route that they would receive in a hospital. In providing medical transport services throughout the province, Ornge is helping to ensure that residents in even the smallest communities and farthest corners of Ontario have access to high quality healthcare.

Due to the nature of Ornge's operations, its staff members have seen and heard the stories of how patients of all ages have come to require its services; however, the most unfortunate stories involve children who fall victim to preventable injuries. In response to its desire to "keep kids off stretchers," Ornge established J Smarts in 2007, a unique charitable organization dedicated to reducing the frequency and severity of preventable injuries amongst children and youth. J Smarts' programming focuses on health promotion, injury prevention, risk management and risk education for youths aged 10 to 17 across the province of Ontario, encouraging students at schools, camps, and community groups across the province to "Think it Thru" by asking four simple questions "Should I?, Could I? Would I? What If?" before engaging in a potentially risky activity. Through its innovative outreach programs, J Smarts has helped over 15,000 children throughout Ontario to live safe and active lifestyles through childhood and beyond.

To learn more about Ornge and J Smarts, please visit their websites at www.ornge.ca and www.jsmarts.ca.



HOME SAFE HOME

Fire safety is often overlooked by post-secondary students

Parents of college- and university-bound kids often worry about the new responsibilities and freedoms that their off-spring will face. In addition to checking items off the back-to-school shopping list, it's important for parents to share valuable information and advice about everything from financial management to drinking responsibly. There are other important lessons that can be easily overlooked in the excitement of the big move.

"Whether returning to school or leaving home for the first time, a discussion about good fire safety practices can help to ensure this exciting time in a student's life is not marred by a fire tragedy," says Fire Chief Rob Simonds, president of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC).



"When it comes to fire safety, knowledge is power, which is why parents should talk to their kids about fire safety," said Victoria Maybee, spokesperson for Duracell. "Fire safety is something all Canadians, including young adults, should take seriously and we want to help spread the word."

Living Safely 101:

According to the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council here is what every student should know to prevent fire:

- Your room or apartment must have working smoke alarms. Test them monthly and notify the landlord immediately if they're not working.
- Replace dead batteries right away.
- Be equipped with a smoke alarm/carbon monoxide alarm, flashlight, radio and extra batteries.
- Look while you cook. Never leave grease fires unattended. If a pot catches fire, put a lid over it and turn off the stove.
- Keep an eye on excessive drinkers. Alcohol is a common factor in many fire fatalities involving cooking and smoking.
- Clear the clutter. Keep things that burn away from heat sources like stove tops, space heaters and electronic equipment.
- Plan to escape. Know two ways out of your room or apartment in case of fire.
- Consider flameless battery operated candles.
- Establish rules for smokers. Smoke outside.
- Do not overload electrical outlets and use only approved power bars for extension cords.

More fire safety resources and tips are available online at www.duracellfiresafety.com or www.cafc.ca.

www.newscanada.com

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Ladder Safety

Ladders are the largest tool in the house. They are essential for trimming trees, painting, cleaning and many other necessary tasks. However, falls from ladders at home lead to thousands of injuries every year.

Questions:

1. Today's ladders are designed so they can safely be used on unstable or slippery surfaces.

True or False

2. You can reach up to one metre upwards or to the side of the ladder.

True or False

3. It is safe to stand as high as the second rung from the top of a straight or extension ladder.

True or False

4. Using the right ladder for the job is critical for safety.

True or False

5. When climbing up or down, face the ladder and hold the rungs with both hands.

True or False

1. **False.** Always make sure the ladder is on a firm, level surface and all locks are engaged.
2. **False.** Stretching and leaning to the side is a leading cause of falls. Move the ladder to reach your work.
3. **False.** For an extension ladder, the highest safe standing level is the fourth rung. For a step-ladder, stand no higher than the second rung from the top.
4. **True.** The maximum load a ladder can safely handle is called its duty rating. To determine the proper ladder size, subtract the climber's height from the height of the job. Use the right type of ladder for the job; for example, don't try to use a step-ladder as an extension ladder. Last but not least, make sure the ladder is in good repair.
5. **True.** Your body should be centered between the side rails. Maintain a firm grip and use slip-resistant shoes are also recommended.

Answers:



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