

SafetyCanada

THE MEMBER NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADA SAFETY COUNCIL

OCTOBER 2022

VOL. LXVI No. 4



PICKING UP THE PIECES: SAFETY AFTER DISASTER

The weather forecast has been bleak recently, calling for a natural event that risks being especially damaging. You, ever-prepared, take no chances. You read tips, you follow the advice, you assess the risks.

You trim your tree branches, prepare your emergency kit, ensure that everything loose is secured and won't go flying away on you.

During the weather event, you are also cautious. You stay indoors, away from potential danger areas. Depending on the severity, maybe you are even forced to evacuate your home and take shelter elsewhere.

Still, you made it through with your health and safety intact and, hopefully, no injuries or casualties among friends and family.

Now, imminent danger is gone and makes way for a new stressor: the aftermath. And how daunting it is! Trees are down, power is out, and the roads are in various states of disarray.

Does this sound familiar? Whether in reference to Hurricane Fiona's recent landfall in Atlantic Canada, the hot and dry prairies in Western Canada leading to wildfires, the November 2021 tornado landing in Vancouver, record heats or floods, there's no denying that climate events are on the rise in the country.

While unique events do require specific action – for instance, the aftermath of a summer storm will vary wildly from that of a mid-winter blizzard – here are nevertheless a few all-purpose safety tips to help you mitigate the after-effects.

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President's Perspective: Psychological Safety

In recent years we have seen increasingly greater identification of mental health issues. With one in five affected in some way by mental health in their lifetime it is good to see the awareness and more than that the confidence in bringing issues forward. Prior to the pandemic there was much discussion about creating psychologically safe work environments but the advent of the pandemic itself has had an additional influence on work conditions and social isolation/interaction.

While the COVID-19 pandemic brought about increased levels of stress and anxiety — according to Statistics Canada, 24 per cent of Canadians reported their own mental health since COVID-19 as fair or poor, compared to eight per cent in a 2018 study — the evolving situation surrounding return to in-person work has been met with mixed results. Mental Health Research Canada reports only four per cent of Canadians have workplace policies that have been adapted with new COVID-19 mental health supports.

A McKinsey study in June 2022 identified that, of workers who worked remotely during the earlier stages of the pandemic but have since returned to the office, 36 per cent report negative mental health effects on-site, while 37 per cent report positive effects. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is no clear and obvious solution here which may be why we currently see variation in work environments including hybrid work arrangements (in/remote office) being adopted. The uniqueness of employer and employee requirements complicate things and while we continue to work at finding balance, maintaining a psychologically safe work environment must remain front of mind.

Psychological safety can have far-reaching implications on a workplace. The overarching principle here is to create an open and inviting environment where people see their value and feel positive about contributing knowing they are respected, they will be treated fairly and equitably and that in all they do and say they are operating in a safe environment. An environment where discretionary effort can be untethered and the best outcomes can be achieved.

According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), a staggering 70 per cent of Canadian employees are concerned about psychological safety and health in their workplace. Further, 14 per cent of these same respondents don't

think their own workplace is safe or healthy.

Creating a work culture that encourages engagement and participation is an important component of safe workplaces. Here are a few thoughts to consider.

- **Inclusion.** Create an environment where everyone feels free to be their authentic selves. An environment where equity and opportunity also operate in balance.
- **Learning.** Set a standard that encourages learning, that it's okay to extend and grow, that it's great to share, and that it's okay to make mistakes in the pursuit of knowledge and growth.
- **Input.** Opinions are contributions and therefore have value. It is important to encourage contributions of all kinds not just when it is convenient or when it aligns to existing thinking. Everyone should feel as though they can be meaningfully involved.
- **Challenge.** The status quo is really only as a baseline for current practices. The notion of continuous improvement is ever present and when an employee feels truly psychologically safe, they bring forward what they perceive to be opportunities in function, continuous improvement, and innovation.
- **Reward and recognition.** Creating opportunity is important and necessary but so too is acknowledging contribution.

Psychological safety is a pressing issue as the world of work continues to evolve. It is important that employees feel valued, appreciated, challenged, engaged and respected. There really is no finish line in workplace psychological safety but together we can continue to consider impact and influence in the context of creating environments that best support people.

If you are interested in psychological safety at your workplace a great starting place would be the MHCC's standard for Psychological Safety in the Workplace [here](#).

Make Safety a Priority!



Gareth Jones
President and CEO



Picking Up the Pieces: Safety after Disaster (Continued from page 1)

- **Avoid travel that isn't essential.**
Often, the aftermath of a major climate event will necessitate some road maintenance. Trees may have fallen, power lines may be down, or there may be an abundance of snow or floodwater. Whatever the case, trust the maintenance crews to do their jobs and give them the space needed to do it.
 - **Be mindful of your emissions.**
If your home is without power, you may need to rely on tools like generators, camp stoves and charcoal grills. Each of these can emit carbon monoxide (CO), a colourless and odourless gas that can quickly become deadly in concentrated doses. Never use any of these items indoors – keep them outdoors at least six metres away from any window, door or vent.

It is also a smart idea to acquire a battery-operated CO detector. If it begins to alarm, leave the house immediately and call 911.
 - **Watch out for downed power lines.**
You should never approach a downed power line. There may still be current flowing through the line, and you should assume that is the case. Report these lines to your local energy provider, and be especially careful not only to avoid the line, but also to avoid anything it may be touching.
 - **Clean with the right equipment.**
Depending on the damage done, you may have a fair amount of cleanup at home or on your property. Remember to work smart, with the right tools for the job. These can include work gloves, respirator masks, water-proof and/or steel-toed boots and goggles.
 - **Work smart.**
Post-disaster cleanup can be long, tiring work. Pace yourself, and prioritize. It is important at this stage to avoid being overwhelmed, so rather than focus on the job as a whole you should instead focus on one item at a time and get that done.
 - **Work in teams for any heavy lifting.**
There's always the temptation to try and do it all ourselves, but this is an approach that causes more problems in the long run. Get help where you can.
- In the event of a flood, you can also [click here for more information](#) on how best to stay safe in the prevention, mitigation and rehabilitation.

Gearing Up Motorcycle Training

Have you booked your Gearing Up motorcycle training program? Better hurry – the season is quickly coming to a close! Visit <https://ridertraining.org/gearing-up/> for more information on what the course entails, what you'll need, and where you can learn. Happy riding!

VEHICLE & ROAD SAFETY



Tips for using driver assistance technologies safely

(NC) From blind spot warnings to cameras, sensors and adaptive cruise control, [driver assistance technologies](#) have come a long way.

As much as these tools can help, they can't replace an attentive driver.

They have limitations and don't always work as expected.

Here are some things to keep in mind.

Know your features

Manufacturers don't always use standard terms for driver assistance features, so it's important that you become familiar with the features in your vehicle and know how to use them safely.

Understand their limitations

Some features may only work in specific conditions – for example, at certain speeds



or when lanes are clearly visible — so make sure you understand their limits.

Stay focused

Automated features are there to provide an extra layer of protection while driving, not to do the driving for you. Stay focused on the road and avoid distractions.

Revisit the basics

With the advancements in driver assist features, it can be tempting to let your vehicle do the work for you. Even if your car is helping, remember to check your mirrors often, check your blind spots when changing lanes or reversing, and keep an eye on your speed.

You can find more information on your vehicle's technology

systems in your owner's manual, on the manufacturer's website or at canada.ca/driverassistance.



(NC) Infants and children face greater health risks from exposure to indoor air pollutants. Children are smaller than adults, have higher breathing rates and activity levels, and have a different ability to metabolize certain chemicals. Children also experience higher rates of asthma compared to adults.

Air pollutants like formaldehyde released from composite wood and other building products, tobacco smoke, small particles emitted when using wood-burning appliances, vehicle exhaust, as well as nitrogen dioxide from indoor gas stoves, fireplaces and other fuel-burning appliances, can aggravate asthma symptoms in children.

Here are some strategies to reduce your family's exposure to indoor air pollutants:

- **Let fresh air inside.** Safely open windows and doors, especially when renovating or cleaning. Just make sure there is no risk of falling for children and pets. Never idle your car, use a barbecue, or run a generator in an attached garage.
- **Prevent outdoor pollutants from getting in.** When outdoor air quality is poor, help prevent outdoor pollutants from entering the home by closing windows. Set your ventilation systems to recirculation mode. If the weather is warm, turn on air conditioning, if you have it.

- **Use exhaust fans.** Be sure to use a bathroom exhaust fan when showering or bathing and your kitchen range hood fan when cooking.
- **Filter the air.** If your home has a central heating or air conditioning system, ensure the filter has the highest filtration value your system can handle, and remember to change it regularly. Make sure it fits properly and use pleated filters for improved protection.
- **Allow air flow.** Keep baseboards or heating vents clear of furniture and leave interior doors open to allow air and heat to flow.
- **Use an air purifier.** A high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration unit uses a fine filter to trap particle pollutants in the air. Make sure it is the right size for the room and that it is not blocked by furniture.
- **Use a carbon monoxide alarm.** Install at least one CO alarm in your home. Particularly in hallways near bedrooms. Test, maintain, and replace the alarms according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Finally, make sure no one smokes indoors, as second-hand smoke is hazardous to everyone's health. Find more information on keeping your home safe at canada.ca/healthy-home.

Online Training for Youth

Did you know the Canada Safety Council offers a suite of online training courses designed specifically for youth? It's true! Visit <https://csc.vubiz.com/safe-kids> for more info.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

MITIGATING FEELINGS OF BURNOUT



(NC) The mental, physical and emotional exhaustion that are hallmarks of burnout can start to creep up on you.

Though often associated with work, burnout can happen in other situations too – the common factor is ongoing severe stress.

We all want to avoid burnout if we can, but it’s a common condition. In fact, according to a recent survey, feelings of burnout were the main source of stress related to a 12 per cent drop in reported rates of excellent or good mental health compared to the survey’s 2019 results.

Moreover, Canadians who said they had poor mental health were also more likely to take time off from work due to disability than those who reported good mental health.

“It’s no doubt been a challenging and unpredictable time for many working Canadians,” says Jean Salvadore, senior director of life and living benefits at RBC Insurance, which commissioned the survey.

Left unchecked, burnout can also lead to other serious health issues like heart problems,

digestion and mood disorders, so it’s important to be on the lookout.

Signs to watch out for:

- Sleeping too much or too little
- Lack of motivation and feeling disengaged
- Cognitive problems like difficulty focusing
- Feeling isolated
- Feeling numb or a sense of dread
- Physical and/or mental exhaustion
- Tension headaches and stomach issues
- Cynicism, anger or irritability

What you can do:

- Do something big or small that you enjoy
- Reaffirm work-life boundaries
- Practice self-care strategies
- Get active and eat well
- Take time off and really relax – even if it seems impossible
- Develop a support network of trusted family, friends or a therapist

Another important just-in-case action is to speak with an expert about disability insurance, which might help replace your income if you can’t work due to mental health issues from burnout.

Looking Ahead

The coming months bring the Canada Safety Council’s busy campaign season. Have a sneak peek at a few upcoming dates and topics we’ll be discussing:

National School Safety Week (October 17 - 23)

With vaccines undoubtedly remaining an important part of our lives moving forward, the need for credible, well-sourced information in schools is also here to stay. We’ll be sharing resources schools can use to help inform this important issue.

National Community Safety & Crime Prevention Month (November)

With such a broad topic, we can often lose sight of the basics. This year’s campaign will return to the fundamentals, asking: what concrete steps can we take to keep our communities safer?

National Senior Safety Week (November 6 - 12)

Older Canadians are becoming increasingly targeted by fraud and scams. We’ll go through some useful tips on how to identify a fraudulent message.

HOME & COMMUNITY SAFETY

DOES WEATHER AFFECT ARTHRITIS?

(NC) Is there truth to the idea that weather affects your joints, or is it an old saying?

Scientists are not yet sure why, but studies do suggest that weather changes can increase pain.

While controlling the weather isn't an option, there are things you can do to manage your pain. Start by tracking your symptoms. You can find a daily symptom tracker on the Arthritis Society's website. Once you know what kind of weather affects you, follow these tips.

If your symptoms are worse in warm weather:

- A cool shower or cold pack can help with pain and inflammation on hot days.
- It's important to stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water and try to avoid caffeine,

alcohol and sugary drinks that can contribute to dehydration.

- Try to avoid spending time in the sun during the hottest hours of the day.
- You can try a cooling ointment or spray that produces an icy feeling where it's applied.

If your symptoms are worse in colder weather:

- Take a warm bath or shower to help relieve the pain.
- Use a hot water bottle, warm pack or heating pad to soothe sore joints.
- Dress in multiple layers and cover exposed skin when outdoors.
- Try soaking your sore hands in warm water.

Find more resources on heat or cold therapy at arthritis.ca.



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ISSN: 0048-8968

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