

# SAFETY CANADA

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## AUTUMN'S ARRIVAL: AVOID SEASONAL AGONY

Autumn is a gorgeous time of the year! Vibrant leaves decorate the landscape, but with it comes the annual chore of leaf removal. While raking leaves can seem like a simple task, it can lead to injuries, particularly back strain, if not done correctly.

By following proper techniques and taking precautions, you can avoid injury and make leaf removal as painless as possible.

**1. Warm Up Before You Start.** Raking leaves involves repetitive motions and bending, which can easily lead to muscle strain or injury, especially if you jump into the task without preparation. Before you begin, take five to ten minutes to warm up your muscles with light stretching or a brisk walk. Focus on loosening your back, shoulders, and hamstrings since these areas will be most engaged during raking. A warm-up increases blood flow to the muscles and helps reduce the risk of strains.

**2. Choose the Right Tools.** Selecting the right tools can make a big difference in how your body handles the work. Use a lightweight rake that is appropriate for your height to avoid unnecessary bending. Ergonomically designed rakes with padded handles help reduce strain on your hands and wrists. Additionally, consider using a rake with a wide fan to gather more leaves at once, reducing the number of strokes needed to clear an area.

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## **PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN SAFETY**

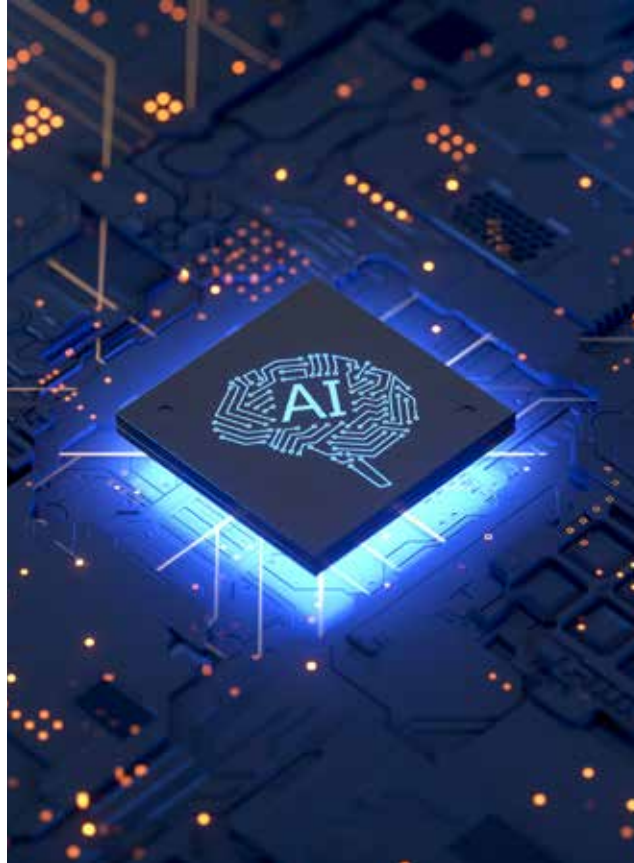
Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing industries, bringing unprecedented improvements to safety. Whether enhancing precision in manufacturing, reducing human error in driving, or supporting workplace safety in high-risk industries, AI's potential for saving lives and preventing accidents is notable. However, it also presents new safety concerns, including the unpredictability of autonomous systems and the lack of transparency in AI decision-making.

### **AI's Benefits for Safety**

AI excels at analyzing vast amounts of data, identifying patterns, and predicting risks that human operators might overlook. In manufacturing, AI can detect equipment failures before they happen, preventing accidents and ensuring that they continue to operate safely. In healthcare, AI is able to identify diseases early, improving patient outcomes. AI-powered autonomous vehicles also have the potential to reduce traffic accidents caused by human error through real-time hazard detection and responsive driving.

In industries like construction and mining, AI-powered drones and robots perform dangerous tasks, minimizing workers' exposure to hazards. Additionally, AI algorithms are boosting disaster response by enabling faster, more efficient rescue operations and even predicting natural disasters like hurricanes, giving communities time to prepare.

scenarios. Autonomous vehicles, for instance, have been involved in fatal accidents during testing due to sensor or software failures. These incidents highlight the need for rigorous testing and oversight of AI systems.



The decision-making processes with AI are often lacking in transparency, which complicates the identification of errors in safety-critical situations. AI systems are also vulnerable to cyberattacks, which could threaten public safety through disruption of important infrastructure.

### **Striking the Right Balance**

As AI continues to evolve, it's crucial for governments, organizations, and developers to collaborate on creating safety standards and transparent accountability for AI systems. Cybersecurity, ethical decision-making, and regulatory oversight are key to ensuring AI

enhances safety while minimizing risks.

AI holds some promise for safety, but its deployment must be managed carefully to protect lives and prevent unintended consequences. By prioritizing safety and responsibility, we can fully harness the power of AI in safeguarding industries and communities.

***Make Safety a Priority!***

Gareth Jones  
President and CEO



### **Addressing AI's Safety Concerns**

Despite its benefits, AI comes with risks, particularly when systems fail or face unforeseen





### *Autum's Arrival (Continued from page 1)*

**3. Use Proper Raking Techniques.** To avoid back pain and muscle strain, practice good posture while raking. Keep your knees slightly bent and your back straight, and use your legs and arms to do most of the work. Instead of bending over to gather leaves, try to keep the rake close to your body and move in a sweeping, side-to-side motion. Switch sides periodically to avoid overworking one side of your body. Remember to take frequent breaks, too — working for too long without rest increases your chance of injury.

**4. Avoid Overloading Leaf Bags.** When bagging leaves, don't fill the bags to maximum capacity or try to lift too much at once. Wet leaves can be deceptively heavy, and overloading bags can strain your back and shoulders. Use smaller piles of leaves to fill bags, and lift with your legs, not your back. Carry bags close to your body to minimize the load on your spine. If you have large amounts of leaves to clear, use a tarp or a wheelbarrow

to transport them, reducing the need to lift heavy loads.

**5. Take Care of Your Hands and Wrists.** Raking can lead to blisters, hand fatigue and repetitive strain injuries if done for long periods. Wearing gloves can protect your hands from blisters and provide additional grip. Stretch your wrists and fingers before and after raking, and take breaks to relax your hands. If you feel soreness in your wrists or hands, take a break. Give them the time needed to rest before resuming.

**6. Know Your Limits.** It's easy to overestimate your physical limits when trying to complete a chore like leaf removal. Don't push yourself too hard—listen to your body and stop if you experience pain or discomfort. Spread the work over several days if necessary, and don't hesitate to ask for help from family members or hire professional landscapers if the task becomes overwhelming.

## **ATV TRAINING COURSE**

We're nearly at the end of ATV Training season — have you taken a rider training course yet? Learn about controls, reading terrain, turning and climbing hills so you can ride your ATV safely and with confidence!

<https://canadasafetycouncil.org/atv-training>



## VEHICLE & ROAD SAFETY

### FALL DRIVING CONSIDERATIONS

Driving conditions can become more challenging during the fall, relative to the clearer summer months. Along with cooler temperatures and changing leaves, the season brings several hazards that drivers need to be mindful of.

Because of this, it can be helpful to refresh ourselves on the changes brought on by the autumn climate. Read on for some key concerns to keep in mind as we shift gears into fall.

One major concern is **reduced visibility**. With shorter days and the sun sitting lower in the sky, harsh sunlight can make it difficult to see. Glare from the sun, especially during early mornings and late afternoons, can momentarily blind drivers, increasing the risk of accidents.

Sunglasses are essential for protecting your eyes from the intense sunlight and improving visibility, especially when driving east in the morning or west during sunset. Keep a pair in your car to use when needed.

Another issue is **wet and slippery roads**. Fallen leaves, when combined with rain, create slick surfaces that can lead to skidding.

Always drive cautiously and avoid sudden braking to prevent loss of control. It's also important to be mindful of frost forming overnight, particularly on bridges and shaded

areas, which can make roads unexpectedly icy in the morning.

**Wildlife activity** increases in the fall as animals like deer are more active during this time, especially at dawn and dusk. Be on high alert for wildlife crossing, especially in rural areas.

As well, autumn is a good time to consider **preparing your car for winter**. Checking tire pressure and tread is essential as colder temperatures can affect tire performance.

While snow tires may not yet be needed, ensuring your vehicle is in good condition will make the transition to winter much easier.

Consider changing over to winter tires once the ambient temperatures reach 7 degrees Celsius or less.

Lastly, **fallen leaves** can obscure road hazards like potholes or debris.

Drive more cautiously in areas where leaves are dense to avoid unseen obstacles that can damage your vehicle or lead to accidents.

By being proactive about these seasonal concerns, you can enjoy autumn driving as the peaceful activity it is, all while keeping yourself safer on the roads.





## YOUTH SAFETY

### PICKING YOUR CHILD'S COSTUME

Halloween is an exciting time for children, but when choosing a costume, safety should always be a top priority.

Here are some tips to ensure your child's costume is both fun and safe:

**Visibility and Fit:** Ensure the costume fits well, avoiding overly long hems that can cause tripping. If the costume includes a mask, make sure it doesn't obstruct your child's vision.

Choose face paint or makeup instead, which allows for clearer visibility and is often more comfortable. Reflective strips or glow-in-the-dark accessories are also terrific additions to ensure that your young trick-or-treater will see and be seen during the evening.

**Fire Safety:** Choose flame-resistant materials for your child's costume. Look for labels that indicate fire-resistant fabrics, or consider costumes made of natural fibers like cotton that are less likely to ignite quickly. Avoid costumes with trailing fabrics that could easily catch fire, such as long capes or flowing dresses.

**Comfort and Weather:** Halloween weather can be unpredictable, so ensure your child's costume is adaptable for warmth. Layering is essential to keep them comfortable during colder temperatures. For warmer climates, make sure the costume is breathable and not

too heavy. Shoes should be comfortable for long walks around the neighborhood. Consider switching pre-made costume footwear for sturdy sneakers.

**Avoid Small Accessories:** Accessories like swords, wands, or tiaras need extra care as they may pose choking hazards. Ensure props are soft and flexible to prevent injuries, especially when children are playing together. Avoid costumes with small buttons or beads that can become a choking risk for younger children. Be mindful of any bans your child's school may have on toy weapon-like accessories including swords and guns.

**Check for Allergens:** Some children may have skin sensitivities to makeup or costume materials. Test face paints or makeup on a small patch of skin before applying them fully. When purchasing costumes, check labels for materials that could cause allergic reactions and avoid them if necessary.

By following these safety guidelines, you can help ensure that your child enjoys Halloween safely and comfortably, without sacrificing any of the fun or creativity that makes the holiday so special.

Keep safety in mind, and have a spooky, fun-filled night!

## YOUTH SAFETY TRAINING

Safety training for our youth remains important in building their confidence and life skills. We offer programs for youth to build their skills, including Babysitter training, Home Alone training, and more!

Contact us at [csc@safety-council.org](mailto:csc@safety-council.org) for more information.



Exposure to loud noises, particularly over prolonged periods, can cause irreversible hearing damage.

While loud environments are commonly associated with construction or industrial settings, noise-induced hearing loss is a risk across many occupations.

Even in offices, high noise levels can affect employees' concentration, productivity, and mental well-being.

Noise-induced hearing loss occurs when sounds louder than 85 decibels damage the tiny hair cells inside the ear. Over time, continued exposure to such noise can lead to permanent hearing damage.

It's important to remember that the damage is gradual and often painless, making it difficult for individuals to notice early symptoms.

Employers have a responsibility to ensure that their work environments do not pose unnecessary risks to hearing. This includes conducting noise assessments and providing employees with adequate hearing protection, such as earplugs or earmuffs, when noise levels exceed safe limits.

Establishing "quiet zones" or installing noise-reducing equipment in certain areas can also help mitigate exposure.

For employees, it's vital to take personal precautions as well. Wearing appropriate hearing protection and limiting exposure to loud sounds during non-work hours are key strategies for maintaining hearing health.

Individuals should also schedule regular hearing tests, especially if they work in noisy environments, to catch any early signs of hearing loss.

Taking a proactive approach to hearing conservation is crucial, as noise-induced hearing loss is both permanent and preventable. By promoting awareness and using effective protective measures, both employers and employees can contribute to safer, healthier workplaces.

Hearing is a vital part of communication, and protecting it is essential for overall well-being and job performance. Whether in an industrial or office setting, safeguarding your hearing today will ensure better quality of life tomorrow.

## Looking Ahead

As we prepare for the upcoming campaign season, here's a sneak peek of what you can expect:

### National School Safety Week (Oct. 17-24)

Ensuring that students and staff are equipped to handle emergencies effectively is a safety measure that must be taken proactively, not reactively. We'll be discussing the school's role in emergency preparedness.

We'll be shining a spotlight on the alarming rise in cybercrime across the country. With more Canadians relying on digital platforms, cybercrime has become one of the most pressing threats to personal and community safety.

### National Senior Safety Week (Nov. 6-12)

Whether living on their own or being cared for by a loved one, safety at home is a crucial element in keeping our elders healthy and safe. We'll be discussing home safety tips, including safety-proofing against falls, trips, and other common hazards.



**National Community Safety & Crime Prevention Month (November)**

# HOME & COMMUNITY SAFETY



## PROACTIVE ALARM CHECKING

As colder months approach and we rely more on indoor heating, it's critical to ensure that carbon monoxide (CO) and smoke detectors are functioning properly.

These devices are essential for protecting your household from fires and potentially deadly CO buildup.

### Test Devices Regularly

Both smoke and carbon monoxide detectors should be tested at least once a month. Most models have a "test" button; press it and listen for the alarm. If it doesn't work, replace the batteries immediately. Even hardwired detectors may have backup batteries that need checking.

### Replace Batteries Annually

Even if your detectors seem to work, it's a good idea to replace the batteries at least once a year. An easy way to remember this is to change the batteries when you adjust your clocks for daylight saving time.

### Replace the Units After 10 Years

Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors have a lifespan of about 7-10 years, after which they're less effective. Check the manufacturer's guidelines to know when to replace the unit, even if it still works.

### Place Detectors in the Right Spots

Smoke detectors should be placed on every floor of your home, particularly near sleeping areas and in the kitchen. Carbon monoxide detectors should be installed near bedrooms and fuel-burning appliances.

### Be Aware of CO Dangers

Carbon monoxide is odorless and invisible, so a CO detector is the only way to know if levels are dangerous. Gas heaters, fireplaces, and furnaces can all produce CO, so it's crucial to have these detectors in place.

By regularly maintaining and testing your smoke and CO detectors, you'll help prevent incidents before they happen.



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