

SAFETY CANADA

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PROTECTING YOUR HOME FROM FLOOD DAMAGE

Flooding can cause extensive damage to homes, leading to costly repairs and loss of valuable belongings. With climate change increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, *being prepared is the best way to protect your home and property from flood damage.* Here's what you can do to minimize risk and stay safe.

1. Know Your Flood Risk. Start by determining if your home is in a flood-prone area. Check local floodplain maps and historical data, and sign up for emergency alerts from your municipality. If you live near a river, lake, or coastal area, take extra precautions to safeguard your property.

2. Keep Water Away from Your Home. Prevent water from pooling around your foundation by:

- Cleaning gutters and downspouts regularly to allow rainwater to flow freely.
- Extending downspouts at least two meters away from your home's foundation.
- Ensuring proper grading around your home so water drains away instead of collecting near the structure.
- Installing a sump pump in your basement to remove excess water and reduce the risk of flooding.

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE: MAKE SMART DECISIONS ON SMART HOMES

Smart technology is changing how we protect our homes and families. With smart locks, doorbell cameras, and motion sensors, homeowners can monitor and control their homes from anywhere using a smartphone.

Fire alarms and carbon monoxide detectors can now send alerts directly to our phones, offering peace of mind even when we're away. But with these advancements come important questions about privacy and security.

The Benefits and Risks of Digital Home Security

Smart home security offers significant advantages over traditional systems. With real-time alerts, remote access, and the ability to see who's at your door or adjust your home's settings from anywhere, digital security systems provide a level of convenience and control that older systems simply can't match.

Beyond security, smart technology enhances daily life. Automated lighting can prevent falls, water leak sensors can prevent costly damage, and smart thermostats can improve energy efficiency and comfort. The ability to manage these features from a smartphone makes life easier and more efficient.

However, this convenience comes with risks. Many smart devices collect and store sensitive data—such as video footage, access logs, and even voice commands. If these systems aren't properly secured, cybercriminals could exploit weak passwords, outdated software, or unsecured networks to access personal data or even take control of your devices. This could lead to privacy breaches, identity theft, or unauthorized access to your home.

Traditional Home Security: Fewer Cyber Risks, But Less Flexibility

Traditional home security systems—like deadbolts, wired alarms, and neighborhood watch programs—offer a simpler, more straightforward approach to safety. They don't rely on internet connections or data storage, which makes them less vulnerable to hacking. However, they lack the convenience and flexibility of smart systems.

For example, traditional systems can't send

alerts to your phone or allow you to lock or unlock doors remotely. Emergency response times may be slower, and the ability to monitor your home while you're away is limited. While these systems avoid the risks of hacking, they also provide less control and fewer features.

Which Option is Better?

There's no one-size-fits-all answer. For those who value convenience and advanced monitoring, smart security systems offer clear benefits—but they require diligent management to prevent cyber risks. Traditional systems may be more reliable for those who prioritize simplicity and privacy over technological advantages.

How to Reduce Risks in Smart Home Security

If you choose to use smart home security, you can minimize risks with these steps:

- Use strong passwords and enable two-factor authentication to protect accounts.
- Keep software and firmware updated to close security gaps.
- Review privacy settings to limit data collection and sharing.
- Buy from trusted brands with strong security and data protection records.
- Disable unnecessary features like continuous voice recording or tracking.

Finding the Right Balance

Smart home technology can enhance security and simplify daily life—but it shouldn't come at the cost of privacy. By staying informed and proactive, homeowners can enjoy the benefits of smart technology while minimizing potential risks.

The key is finding a balance that works for your lifestyle and comfort level.

Make Safety a Priority!



Gareth Jones
President and CEO



Protecting Your Home from Flood Damage (Continued from page 1)

3. Protect Your Basement and Utilities.

Basements are often the first area affected by flooding. Take these steps to minimize damage:

- Seal foundation cracks to prevent water seepage.
- Install a backwater valve to stop sewage from backing up into your home.
- Elevate electrical panels, appliances, and HVAC systems above potential flood levels.
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4. Use Flood Barriers for Extra Protection.

During heavy rain or flood warnings, take additional precautions such as using sandbags to redirect water away from doors and windows, installing flood shields on basement windows and doors, and keeping drains and stormwater grates near your home clear to prevent backups.

5. Have an Emergency Kit Ready. A well-prepared emergency kit can make all the difference in a flood situation. Your kit should include:

- Flashlights and extra batteries
- A battery-powered radio to receive emergency updates
- Non-perishable food and bottled water (at least 72 hours' worth)
- Essential medications and first aid supplies
- Important documents in a waterproof case
- Extra clothing, blankets, and personal hygiene items

6. Plan for a Quick and Safe Evacuation. If authorities issue a flood warning, be ready to leave quickly:

- Know your evacuation routes and have a family emergency plan in place.
- Keep your car's gas tank at least half full during flood season.
- Unplug electrical appliances and turn off power, gas, and water before leaving if it's safe to do so.
- Avoid walking or driving through floodwaters—as little as 15 cm of fast-moving water can knock you off your feet.

GEARING UP FOR SPRING

The spring thaw means that motorcycle season will soon be upon us! Are you a new rider, or an experienced rider seeking a refresher on safety practices? Click through for more information the Canada Safety Council's Gearing Up rider training program!

<https://canadasafetycouncil.org/GearingUp>



VEHICLE & ROAD SAFETY

POTHOLE SEASON: STEER CLEAR OR PAY DEAR!

As Canada transitions between seasons, the rising temperatures may bring relief from snow and ice.. but they also introduce new road hazards.

The freeze-thaw cycle weakens pavement, leading to an increase in potholes, pooling water, and shifting road conditions. Drivers must remain extra vigilant to ensure safe travel during this time of year.

The Impact of Spring Thaw on Roads

The fluctuating temperatures of early spring cause roads to expand and contract, worsening cracks and creating potholes. Melting snow and ice also lead to excessive moisture, which can erode road surfaces and create an increased risk of hydroplaning.

Road Safety Tips for Spring Driving

To navigate spring thaw conditions safely, drivers should take the following precautions:

- **Watch for potholes.** Drive cautiously and scan the road ahead for potholes. If unavoidable, slow down before impact to reduce damage to your vehicle's tires and suspension.
- **Increase following distance.** Wet or damaged roads can affect braking distance. Keep extra space between you and the

vehicle ahead to allow for sudden stops or unexpected hazards.

- **Avoid standing water.** Puddles can be deeper than they appear, potentially hiding potholes or causing hydroplaning. If you must drive through water, do so slowly and steadily.
- **Check tire conditions.** Proper tire pressure and tread depth are essential for maintaining grip on wet and uneven surfaces. Inspect tires regularly to ensure they are in good condition.
- **Stay alert for road crews.** Spring is a busy time for road maintenance. Be prepared for detours, lane closures, and reduced speed limits in construction zones.
- **Keep your vehicle well-maintained.** Suspension and alignment issues caused by rough winter roads can worsen in spring. Have your vehicle inspected to ensure it is in safe driving condition.

Road safety is a shared responsibility with all road users, but it starts with us. As the rise of spring brings about more road hazards to be mindful of, it's through focus and attentiveness that we can help make our commute, and the commute of those around us, that much safer.



YOUTH SAFETY

SPRING INJURY AVOIDANCE

As the snow melts and temperatures rise, kids across Canada are eager to get outside and enjoy the warmer weather.

Whether they're biking, playing sports, or exploring nature, springtime offers plenty of opportunities for fun and physical activity.

However, with increased outdoor activity comes a higher risk of injuries including falls, collisions, and overexertion. Additionally, children may be more prone to scrapes, sprains, and fractures as they engage in high-energy activities without proper supervision or safety gear. By taking a few precautions, parents and caregivers can help keep youth safe this season.

Bicycle and Scooter Safety

With clear roads and bike paths, many children will be eager to hop on their bicycles or scooters. To prevent injuries:

- Ensure helmets fit properly and are worn at all times.
- Check that bikes and scooters are in good working condition, including brakes, tires, and reflectors. Ensure that your child can see and be seen.
- Teach kids to follow road rules, use hand signals, and stay alert to traffic and pedestrians.

Playground Safety

Playgrounds are a popular destination in spring, but falls and equipment-related injuries are common. Reduce risks by:

- Choosing playgrounds with soft surfaces like mulch, sand, or rubber rather than concrete.
- Supervising younger children and encouraging safe play.
- Checking equipment for signs of wear, rust, or loose parts.

Water and Outdoor Exploration Safety

As lakes, rivers, and streams begin to thaw, kids may be drawn to explore the water. Stay safe by:

- Teaching children to avoid playing near fast-moving water or thin ice.
- Ensuring proper supervision when near bodies of water.
- Dressing appropriately for unpredictable spring weather to prevent hypothermia.

By staying proactive and teaching kids safe habits early, we can ensure the habits become engrained and the youth make the most of spring while avoiding preventable injuries.

Let's keep the season fun and safe for everyone — not just now, but in the future and for years to come!

E-LEARNING AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Whether you're looking to improve your knowledge on IT Security and First Aid, or looking to train your staff in WHMIS and Fall Prevention, we've got it all!

Check out <https://csc.vubiz.com/> for our course catalogue, and sign up for some dynamic, interactive e-learning!

WORKPLACE SAFETY

STAYING SAFE AS SEASONS CHANGE

As winter transitions to spring, workplaces across Canada must remain vigilant about the risks of slips, trips, and falls. While melting snow and ice signal warmer days ahead, they also create new hazards that can lead to serious injuries if not properly managed.

The Seasonal Impact on Workplace Safety
Winter months bring well-known dangers like icy sidewalks, snow-covered pathways, and wet entryways. As temperatures fluctuate in early spring, the freeze-thaw cycle leads to unpredictable conditions including patches of ice and slippery surfaces. Additionally, sand and salt used for traction during winter can become tripping hazards if not promptly cleared away.

Spring also brings increased rainfall, which contributes to slick floors and muddy worksites. Whether in an office, a warehouse, or a construction zone, excess moisture can lead to unintended slips if proper precautions are not taken.

Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls

Employers and workers can take proactive steps to minimize risks and ensure workplace safety during this seasonal transition:

Monitor Walkways: Regularly inspect pathways, parking lots, and entrances to remove leftover ice, standing water, and debris. Ensure proper drainage from problem areas.

Ensure Proper Footwear: Employees should wear appropriate, non-slip footwear suited for changing conditions. Employers can encourage or require footwear with good traction for high-risk areas.

Clean Up Spills: Whether from melting snow, rainwater, or workplace spills, wet floors should be marked with signage and cleaned promptly.

The Cost of Inaction

Slips, trips, and falls are among the leading causes of workplace injuries in Canada, resulting in lost productivity, increased insurance costs, and potential long-term health consequences for workers. By proactively addressing seasonal risks, employers can foster a safer work environment and protect their most valuable asset—their people.

As we welcome spring, let's stay one step ahead of these preventable hazards. Prioritizing safety today will ensure a healthier, more productive workplace for all.

Looking Ahead

The spring months at the Canada Safety Council bring on two of our annual campaigns, in addition to our Annual General Meeting. Read on to find out what to expect!

National Summer Safety Week

National Summer Safety Week is held May 1-7 and we will be discussing cycling safety, including how both cyclists and motorists can help keep each other safe on the road this summer.

National Road Safety Week

National Road Safety Week will be held May 13-19 in 2025, focusing on seasonal maintenance tips and tricks. We'll also discuss driver habits and how they can impact any given ride.

Annual General Meeting

Please note that our Annual General Meeting will take place on April 15, 2024, at 10 a.m. The meeting will take place at our office in Ottawa and over Microsoft Teams.

HOME & COMMUNITY SAFETY

HOW LONG CAN YOU EAT THOSE LEFTOVERS?

(NC) There's nothing quite like a nice home-cooked meal. Well, except maybe for the leftovers. Who doesn't love a turkey sandwich in the days after a holiday meal? And some dishes, like chilis and stews, just taste better after the flavours have had time to mingle. But how long after cooking can you safely consume leftovers? Here are tips on how to avoid getting sick from leftovers.

Safety first: While it may be tempting to move from the dinner table to the sofa to watch TV or catch a quick nap after a big meal, you should take care of the leftovers first. You want to make sure that the food temperatures don't drop into the "danger zone" of 4°C (40°F) to 60°C (140°F) where bacteria can thrive.

You can't rely on smell, sight or even taste to determine if something is contaminated. Anything that has been left out for two hours or more should be tossed out.

Cool in the fridge: Any cooked food that will be eaten over the next few days should be stored in the fridge. Pack items into storage containers but leave them uncovered at first. Only seal the lid once the

food has fully cooled down.

Very hot items can be left at room temperature to cool down, but move them to the fridge or freezer once they stop steaming.

Defrosting advice: Never defrost leftovers in the sink or on the counter. If you have time to plan ahead, defrost them in the fridge. Place items on a lower shelf to avoid any leakage contaminating other food. If you don't have time to defrost in the fridge, use your microwave's defrost setting.

Track the time: Leftovers stored in the fridge should be consumed within three to four days. If you want to keep them longer, freeze them. However, once fully defrosted and reheated, leftovers should be consumed immediately and never refrozen.

Depending on the type of food, cooked dishes can be safely frozen for two to six months. To help keep track, label containers with the type of food stored in them and the date they were frozen.

Find more tips at canada.ca/foodsafety.



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