

Safety Sentinel

Dec 2016

Fond du Lac County Safety Committee Mission Statement

It is the Fond du Lac County Safety Committee's mission to provide safety awareness, education, and advocacy to all Fond du Lac County employees, while recognizing it is both the employer and employee's responsibility to maintain a safe work environment.

Safety Tips – Snow Plows

Following are some safety tips for you and your family to keep in mind:

1. Stay at least 200 feet back from a snow-plowing or salt-spreading truck to avoid injury or other problems.
2. Plow trucks often have to back up. There may be blind spots in the mirrors. For your safety, do not pull directly behind a plow truck, as the driver may not be able to see you.
3. When cleaning driveways or parking lots, do not deposit snow on the street. This can cause safety problems for other motorists.
4. Plow trucks typically push snow to the passenger side of the truck (right side when looking at it from the rear). Never attempt to pass a plow truck on the right side since there can be significant amounts of snow on that side of the vehicle.
5. Dim your headlights when approaching a snow plow truck.
6. Do not pull out in front of a snow plow truck.



Source: <http://www.westlafayette.in.gov>

Fond du Lac County Safety Committee Members

Stacie Basler, Dept. of Social Services
 David Brandenburg, Golf Course
 Linda Chandler, Purchasing/Risk Mgmt.
 Ken Fischer, Land & Water Conservation
 Richard Gedemer, Dept. of Social Svcs.
 Heather Heus, Harbor Haven

Diane Immel, Clerk of Courts
 Tom Janke, Highway
 Ann Kaiser, UW-Extension
 Rick Kiefer, Central Maintenance
 Michael Marx, Human Resources
 James McNabb, Emergency Mgmt.

Kim Mueller, Public Health
 Mark Radmer, Health Care Center
 Ray Sharp, Health Care Center
 Sam Tobias, Planning/Parks
 Ryan Waldschmidt, Sheriff's Dept.
 Karen Warren, Wellness

Return via inter-office mail marked "Safety Suggestion Box," give to a Safety Committee member, or put in Safety Suggestion Box at the City/County Govt. Center, 4th floor lobby.

Safety Suggestion

Date: _____

Please share any safety concern or suggestion:

Name (optional) _____

Fireplace Safety

More than 6,000 people end up in emergency rooms for injuries associated with fireplaces and fireplace equipment... and most of the injuries occurred with children under five years old.

Approximately 14,000 house fires each year are started by fireplaces. Most of these fires escalated beyond the fireplace because of an overloaded fire, damage to the fireplace such as missing bricks, obstructed flues, ignition of nearby combustibles, and flying sparks.

Stay safe and warm by following these safety tips:

- Inspect the fireplace. Make sure it has adequate protective linings and smoke ducts. Check to see that the chimney is clear and in good repair.
- If you are installing a factory-made fireplace, it should not be located near any combustible materials. It should also have adequate flame and heat barriers.
- Have chimneys inspected annually, and cleaned as necessary, by a CSIA (Chimney Safety Institute of America) Certified Chimney Sweep. This reduces the risk of fires and carbon monoxide poisonings due to creosote buildup or obstructions in the chimneys. To locate a certified sweep, visit the CSIA Web site at www.csia.org or call 1-800-536-0118. A certified sweep can also perform maintenance on your wood stove or help remove gas logs from a fireplace.
- Keep the top of chimneys clear of tree limbs or debris.
- Install a chimney cap to keep debris and animals out of the chimney.
- Always open the damper before lighting the fire and keep it open until the ashes are cool. This will avert the build-up of poisonous gases, such as carbon monoxide.
- Fuel the fire safely. For burning firewood in wood stoves or fireplaces, choose well-seasoned wood that has been dried for a minimum of six months to a year and stored properly.
- Build it right. Place firewood or fire logs at the rear of the fireplace on a supporting grate. To start the fire, use a firelighter.
- Never use gasoline, charcoal lighter or other flammable fuels to light or relight a fire because the vapors can explode. Never keep flammable fuels near a fire. Vapors can travel the length of a room and explode.
- Do not use coal or charcoal in a fireplace because of the danger of carbon monoxide build-up. Do not burn trash or gift wrap in the fireplace because polystyrene foam and other coated materials can generate deadly fumes. Flying paper embers could also ignite the roof.
- Do not treat artificial logs like real logs. Artificial logs are usually made of sawdust and wax and have special burning properties. Be sure to read the instructions on the logs and follow them carefully. Use just one log at a time and do not add another log until the fire is completely out. Never add an artificial log to a natural wood fire that is already burning. Wait at least two hours before adding an artificial log to a natural log fire because it could cause a flare-up.
- Do not poke artificial logs because the flaming wax could stick to the poker and drop onto the floor or carpet. Poking a log could also cause a flare-up.
- Home rolled newspaper logs should never be soaked in flammable fuels of any kind because of the severe danger of explosion. Soaking the newspaper in water either before rolling or during rolling removes the clay content and will provide a better burning log. Then, stack the logs on end and let them dry for two weeks in the basement. When lighting the newspaper logs, use kindling just as you would for a regular fire.
- Do not overload the fireplace. Large fires can lead to overheating of wall or roof materials, particularly if the fireplace is constructed of metal.
- Always use a screen around the fireplace to keep sparks from flying out and to protect children and adults from accidental clothing ignition.
- Warn children about the danger of fire. Do not let them play with fire.
- Keep flammable materials such as carpets, pillows, furniture or papers away from the fireplace area.
- At holiday time, make sure the Christmas tree is not close enough to be ignited by a spark. Be especially careful of accidentally igniting holiday wrapping papers.
- Always make sure that the fire is completely extinguished before going to bed for the night or when leaving the house.

Source: <http://www.highlandfire.org>

Stress, Depression and the Holidays

Tips for Coping

Stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health. Being realistic, planning ahead and seeking support can help ward off stress and depression.



The holiday season often brings unwelcome guests — stress and depression. And it's no wonder. The holidays present a dizzying array of demands — parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few.

But with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

1. **Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.
2. **Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.
3. **Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children can't come to your house, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails or videos.
4. **Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time

for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.

5. **Stick to a budget.** Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.

Try these alternatives:

- Donate to a charity in someone's name.
- Give homemade gifts.
- Start a family gift exchange.

6. **Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.
7. **Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.
8. **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.

Try these suggestions:

- Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Incorporate regular physical activity into each day.

9. **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

Some options may include:

- Taking a walk at night and stargazing.
- Listening to soothing music.
- Getting a massage.
- Reading a book.

10. **Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.

Source: [Mayo Clinic](#)

Radon Information for Wisconsin

Radon is a naturally occurring gas that can leak into your home and is common in Wisconsin. While you can't see or smell it, you can protect yourself from it.

FIND OUT WHERE RADON IS HIGHEST IN WISCONSIN

[View our interactive map \(link is external\)](#) of radon test results to see areas in Wisconsin where radon levels are the highest.

TEST YOUR HOME

You can buy a radon test kits from hardware stores or a [Radon Information Center](#) for around \$20; [certified measurement professionals](#) are also available.

FIX A RADON PROBLEM

If your radon levels are high, a contractor can fix it. Check out the [certified contractor listings](#).

SAVE A LIFE

Radon is the second leading cause of [lung cancer](#) in the United States.

Test kits are available from the County Health Department. For more information on radon, see www.lowradon.org or contact the County Health Department, 929-3085.

Snow Thrower Safety Alert

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) wants you and your family to be safe when using snow throwers. CPSC has received reports of injuries with snow throwers, including finger amputations. Injuries most frequently occur when consumers tried to clear the auger/collector or discharge chute with their hands.

People have died after becoming caught in the machine. Others have died from carbon monoxide poisoning resulting from leaving the engine running in an enclosed space.



CPSC offers the following safety tips for using snow throwers:

- Stop the engine and use a long stick to unclog wet snow and debris from the machine. Do not use your hands to unclog a snow thrower.
- Always keep hands and feet away from all moving parts.
- Never leave the machine running in an enclosed area.
- Add fuel to the tank outdoors before starting the machine; don't add gasoline to a running or hot engine. Always keep the gasoline can capped, and store gasoline out of the house and away from ignition sources.
- If you have an electric-powered snow thrower, be aware of where the power cord is at all times.

Most snow thrower injuries happen when consumers try to clear snow from the discharge chute or debris from the auger/collectors. Always stop the engine before attempting to clear snow and debris from any part of the snow thrower.

Source: US Consumer Product Safety Commission
https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/5117_Snowthrower_Safety_Alert.pdf

Winter Driving Tips 2016

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

When the chilly temperatures of winter set in, will your vehicle be ready for the cold? If you live in a part of the country that experiences inclement weather, such as heavy rain, snow and ice, are you prepared to drive in those conditions? Planning and preventative maintenance are important year-round—but especially when it comes to winter driving.



BEFORE YOU GO

Get Your Car Serviced

No one wants their car to break down in any season, but especially not in cold, icy or snowy winter weather. Start the season off right by ensuring your vehicle is in optimal condition.

- Visit your mechanic for a tune-up and other routine maintenance.
- Have your entire vehicle checked thoroughly for leaks, badly worn hoses, or other needed parts, repairs, and replacements.

Check for Recalls

- Owners may not always know their recalled vehicle still needs to be repaired. NHTSA's Recalls Look-Up Tool lets you enter a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) to quickly learn if a specific vehicle has not been repaired as part of a safety recall in the last 15 years. Check for recalls on your vehicle by searching now: <https://vinrcl.safercar.gov/vin/>.

Know Your Car

Every vehicle handles differently; this is particularly true when driving on wet, icy, or snowy roads. Take time now to learn how your vehicle handles under winter weather driving conditions.

- Before driving your vehicle, clean snow, ice or dirt from the windows, the forward sensors, headlights, tail lights, backup camera and other sensors around the vehicle.
- Practice driving on snow-covered or icy roads when your area gets snow — but not on a main road. Sharpen your winter weather driving skills and know how your vehicle handles in snowy conditions by practicing in an empty parking lot. See your vehicle's manual to familiarize yourself with the features on your vehicle such as antilock brakes and electronic stability control, and how the features perform in slippery conditions. For example, your vehicle or pedals may pulsate when controlling traction.
- For electric and hybrid-electric vehicles, minimize the drain on the battery. If the vehicle has a thermal heating pack for the battery, plug your vehicle in whenever it's not in use. Pre-heat the passenger compartment before you unplug your vehicle in the morning.
- When renting a car, become familiar with the vehicle before driving it off the lot. Know the location of the hazard lights switch in case of emergency, and review the owner's manual so that you're prepared for any driving situation that may arise.

VEHICLE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Battery

When the temperature drops, so does battery power. For gasoline and diesel engines, it takes more battery power to start your vehicle in cold weather. For electric and hybrid-electric vehicles, the driving range is reduced when the battery is cold, and battery systems work better after they warm up. Make sure your battery is up to the challenges of winter.

- Have your mechanic check your battery for sufficient voltage, amperage and reserve capacity.

- Have the charging system and belts inspected.
- Replace the battery or make necessary system repairs, including simple things like tightening the battery cable connections.
- Keep gasoline in a hybrid-electric vehicle, to support the gasoline engine.

Lights

See and be seen! Make sure all the lights on your vehicle are in working order. Check your headlights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers, and interior lights. Towing a trailer? Be sure to also check your trailer brake lights and turn signals. Trailer light connection failure is a common problem and a serious safety hazard.

Cooling System

- Make sure the cooling system is in proper working order.
- Make sure you have enough coolant in your vehicle and the coolant meets the manufacturer's specifications. See your vehicle owner's manual for specific recommendations on coolant.
- Thoroughly check the cooling system for leaks or have your mechanic do it for you.
- Have the coolant tested for proper mix, proper pH (acidity) and strength of the built-in corrosion inhibitors. Over time, the rust inhibitors in antifreeze break down and become ineffective.
- Drain and replace the coolant in your vehicle as recommended by the manufacturer, to remove dirt and rust particles that can clog the cooling system and cause it to fail.

Windshield Washer Reservoir

You can go through a lot of windshield wiper fluid fairly quickly in a single snowstorm, so be prepared for whatever might come your way.

- Completely fill your vehicle's reservoir before the first snow hits.
- Use high-quality "winter" fluid with de-icer and keep extra in your vehicle.

Windshield Wipers and Defrosters

Safe winter driving depends on achieving and maintaining the best visibility possible.

- Make sure your windshield wipers work; replace worn blades.
- Consider installing heavy-duty winter wipers if you live in an area that gets a lot of snow and ice.
- Check to see that your front and rear window defrosters work properly.

Floor Mats

Improperly installed floor mats in your vehicle may interfere with the operation of the accelerator or brake pedal, increasing the risk of a crash.

- Remove old floor mats before installing new mats; never stack mats.
- Use mats that are the correct size and fit for your vehicle.
- Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for mat installation. Use available retention clips to secure the mat and prevent it from sliding forward.
- Every time the mats are removed for any reason, verify that the driver's mat is reinstalled correctly.

Tires

- If you plan to use snow tires, have them installed in the fall so you are prepared before it snows. Check out Safercar.gov for tire ratings before buying new ones and look for winter tires with the snowflake symbol.
- Regardless of season, inspect your tires at least once a month and before long road trips. It only takes about five minutes. If you find yourself driving under less-than-optimal road conditions this winter, you'll be glad you took the time. Don't forget to check your spare tire!
- As the outside temperature drops, so does tire inflation pressure. Make sure each tire is filled to the vehicle manufacturer's recommended inflation pressure, which is listed

in your owner's manual and on a placard located on the driver's side door frame. The correct pressure is NOT the number listed on the tire. Be sure to check tires when they are cold, which means the car hasn't been driven for at least three hours.

- Look closely at your tread and replace tires that have uneven wear or insufficient tread. Tread should be at least 2/32 of an inch or greater on all tires.
- Check the age of each tire. Some vehicle manufacturers recommend that tires be replaced every six years regardless of use, but check your owner's manual to find out.
- For more information on tire safety, visit the TireWise page at [Safercar.gov/tires](https://www.safercar.gov/tires).

Stock Your Vehicle

Carry items in your vehicle to handle common winter driving-related tasks, such as cleaning off your windshield, as well as any supplies you might need in an emergency. Keep the following in your vehicle:

- Snow shovel, broom, and ice scraper.
- Abrasive material such as sand or kitty litter, in case your vehicle gets stuck in the snow.
- Jumper cables, flashlight, and warning devices such as flares and emergency markers.
- Blankets for protection from the cold.
- A cell phone with charger, water, food, and any necessary medicine (for longer trips or when driving in lightly populated areas).

Plan Your Travel and Route

Keep yourself and others safe by planning ahead before you venture out into bad weather.

- Check the weather, road conditions, and traffic.
- Don't rush! Allow plenty of time to get to your destination safely. Plan to leave early if necessary.
- Familiarize yourself with directions and maps before you go, even if you use a GPS system, and let others know your route and anticipated arrival time.

SAFETY FIRST

Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones

- Always wear your seat belt and ensure that everyone else in your vehicle is buckled-up in age and size-appropriate restraints.

Protect Your Children

- Remember that all children under age 13 should always ride properly restrained in the back seat.
- Make sure car seats and booster seats are properly installed and that any children riding with you are in the right car seat, booster seat, or seat belt for their age and size. See [Safercar.gov/parents](https://www.safercar.gov/parents) for NHTSA's child passenger safety recommendations and to find out how to select the right seat for your child's age and size. To learn more and find a free car seat inspection station near you, please visit the Child Car Seat Inspection Station Locator at [Safercar.gov](https://www.safercar.gov).
- While thick outerwear will keep your children warm, it can also interfere with the proper harness fit on your child in a car seat. Instead, place blankets or coats around your child **after** the harness is snug and secure.
- Never leave your child unattended in or around your vehicle.
- Always remember to lock your vehicle and to keep your keys out of reach when exiting so children do not play or get trapped inside.

ON THE ROAD

Stay Alert

- Keep your gas tank close to full, even with a hybrid-electric vehicle. If you get stuck in a traffic jam or in snow, you might need more fuel than you anticipated to get home or to keep warm.
- If road conditions are hazardous, avoid driving if possible. Wait until road and weather conditions improve before venturing out in your vehicle.
- On longer trips, plan enough time to stop to stretch, get something to eat, return calls or text messages, and change drivers or rest if you feel drowsy.

Avoid Risky Driving Behaviors

- Do not text or engage in any activities that may distract you while driving.
- Obey all posted speed limits, but drive even slower if necessary for weather conditions.
- Drive sober. Alcohol and drugs impair perception, judgment, motor skills, and memory – the skills critical for safe and responsible driving.

Driving in Winter Conditions

- Drive slowly. It's harder to control or stop your vehicle on a slick or snow-covered surface. On the road, increase your following distance enough so that you'll have plenty of time to stop for vehicles ahead of you.
- Know whether your vehicle has an antilock brake system and learn how to use it properly. Antilock brake systems prevent your wheels from locking up during braking. If you have antilock brakes, apply firm, continuous pressure to the brake pedal. If you don't have antilock brakes, you may need to pump your brakes if you feel your wheels starting to lock up.

Navigating Around Snow Plows

- Don't crowd a snow plow or travel beside it. Snow plows travel slowly, make wide turns, stop often, overlap lanes, and exit the road frequently.
- The road behind an active snow plow is safer to drive on. If you find yourself behind a snow plow, stay behind it or use caution when passing.
- When you are driving behind a snow plow, don't follow or stop too closely. A snow plow operator's field-of-vision is limited; if you can't see the mirrors, the driver can't see you. Also, materials used to de-ice the road could hit your vehicle.
- Snow plows can throw up a cloud of snow that can reduce your visibility to zero in less time than you can react. Never drive into a snow cloud – it can conceal vehicles or hazards.

IN AN EMERGENCY

What to Do in a Winter Emergency

If you are stopped or stalled in wintry weather, follow these safety rules:

- Stay with your car and don't overexert yourself.
- Put bright markers on the antenna or windows and keep the interior dome light turned on.
- To avoid asphyxiation from carbon monoxide poisoning, don't run your car for long periods of time with the windows up or in an enclosed space. If you must run your vehicle, clear the exhaust pipe of any snow and run it only sporadically — just long enough to stay warm.