

Safety Sentinel

Nov 2011

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.

Winter Safety Tips for Children

As the weather turns chilly, new dangers for kids are appearing; but these winter safety tips for children can help keep them safe, warm and healthy through the coldest months of the year.

Why Winter can be Dangerous

Winter weather can be dangerous in several ways. The dropping temperatures and wind chills create climatic hazards, while the general indoor lethargy of winter can create health hazards due to overeating and less activity. Winter sports, holiday gifts and winter nutrition also present unique hazards that parents should be aware of in order to safeguard their children's health and well-being. With careful planning and supervision, however, children can enjoy the fun and freedom of playing indoors or outdoors on chilly winter days without substantial risk.



Types of Winter Safety Tips for Children

Not every type of winter hazard is applicable to every child, but understanding the basic risks and how to minimize them can help parents protect their children from the ravages of winter.

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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/egov/docs/1233856447950.htm>

- - - - Cut and return inter-office mail marked "Safety Suggestion Box" or give to a Safety Committee Member - - - -

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 or damage to the fireplace, such as missing bricks, obstructed flues, ignition of nearby combustibles, and flying sparks.

Keep your family safe and warm by following these tips:

- Inspect the fireplace.
- Have chimneys inspected annually. This reduces the risk of fires and carbon monoxide poisonings due to creosote buildup or obstructions in the chimneys. To locate a certified sweep, go to www.csia.org or call 1-800-536-0118. A certified sweep can also perform maintenance on wood stoves or help remove gas logs from a fireplace.
- Keep the top of chimneys clear of tree limbs or debris.
- Always open the damper before lighting the fire and keep it open until the ashes are cool. This will avert the buildup of poisonous gases, such as carbon monoxide.
- Never use gasoline, charcoal lighter or other fuel to light or relight a fire because the vapors can explode.
- Do not treat artificial logs like real logs.
- Always use a screen around the fireplace to keep sparks from flying out and to prevent accidental clothing ignition.
- At holiday time, make sure the Christmas tree is not close enough to be ignited by a spark.
- Always make sure that the fire is completely extinguished before going to bed for the night or when leaving the house.

Source: www.about.com "Fireplace Safety - Facts to Help You Operate Your Fireplace"

Snow Thrower Safety Alert

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) wants you and your family to be safe when using snow throwers. In a recent year, there were approximately 590 finger amputations involving snow throwers. CPSC estimates that each year on average there are approximately 5,740 hospital emergency room-related injuries associated with snow throwers. CPSC has received reports of 19 deaths since 1992 involving snow throwers. Two people died after becoming caught in the machine. Five deaths were caused by carbon monoxide poisoning resulting from leaving the engine running in an enclosed area.

Injuries most frequently occurred when consumers tried to clear the auger/collector or discharge chute with their hands.

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.



From the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC

Winter Safety Tips for Children – continued

Playing Outside

The cold temperatures and biting winds are the most obvious hazards when children play in the snow. Children who are not prepared for winter climates can suffer frostbite, hypothermia and severe chills that can lead to illness, poor judgment and even permanent injury. To avoid the dangers of cold weather:

- Dress in multiple layers to play outside, including extra layers for legs, feet and hands.
- Always wear hats and gloves when playing outdoors in cold weather; the biggest proportions of body heat are lost through the head and hands.
- Limit the amount of time spent playing outdoors to safe intervals, and bring children inside periodically to warm up.
- Remove all wet clothing immediately and change to dry clothes if going back outdoors.
- Wear sunscreen on all exposed skin to guard against burns from bright sunlight and snow glare.
- Do not permit children to play outdoors in poor weather such as snowstorms, extreme cold or high winds.
- Wear brightly colored outer clothing that is easily seen from a distance.
- Do not dress children in winter wear with drawstrings - they can cut off circulation and make frostbite a greater threat, and loose drawstrings may present a strangulation hazard.
- Teach children to avoid playing near snowplow areas.
- Do not permit children to dig snow tunnels or forts that may collapse and bury them.
- Avoid snowball fights that can lead to injuries from dangerous projectiles.
- Keep roofs, gutters and awnings free from snow and icicle buildup that could collapse and injure a child. Similarly, do not permit children to pull icicles from the roof.
- Teach children never to touch or lick exposed metal (fences, flagpoles, etc.) in winter.
- Do not allow children to eat snow. It may contain pollutants, dirt, fecal matter or other contaminants, and the cold snow can chill a young child's body to dangerous levels.
- Regularly de-ice or sand sidewalks, driveways, patios and other areas where children may play.



Winter Sports

Winter sports can be a great way for children to stay active and enjoy colder temperatures, but each sport presents its own unique hazards. These winter safety tips for children can help them enjoy sports safely and comfortably.

- Always use proper safety equipment and gear, including sports goggles and helmets, while playing winter sports.
- Engage in safe sports behavior such as following the rules of the game and eliminating horseplay that can lead to accidents and injuries.
- Enroll children in lessons from a qualified professional for advanced winter sports such as figure skating, skiing and snowboarding to ensure they learn safe techniques.
- Only play winter sports in safe, approved locations rather than using seemingly frozen ponds, unknown hillsides or other potentially dangerous locations.

Staying Healthy

The long days of winter often keep children indoors, which can lead to hours of inactivity. Furthermore, children are more likely to contract illnesses during the winter months because they are in more confined spaces. To stay healthy during the winter, consider these safety tips:

- Eat a healthy, balanced diet that includes fruits and vegetables.
- Teach children proper hand-washing techniques to kill germs and bacteria or use hand sanitizer if necessary.
- Keep children home from school and other public places if they are sick.
- Ask a pediatrician about the necessity for flu vaccines for young children.

Holiday Safety Tips

The holidays are a time of fun and excitement, but they can also be dangerous. Inappropriate toys, indulgent foods and unsafe decorations can create hazards that may cause injuries to children of all ages. These safety tips can help avoid the greatest risks:

- Do not use "candy" style ornaments or holiday decorations that may fool young children.
- Limit the amount of holiday sweets and treats children are allowed to eat.
- Choose unbreakable ornaments for safe tree decorations, and be sure no ornaments are small enough to be swallowed.

- Only give age-appropriate toys and gifts to children.
- Check toy recall notices for any holiday gift items.

Heating Tips

The natural reaction to falling temperatures is to raise the heat, either through external, supplemental heaters or by turning on a fireplace or other open flames. These safety tips can keep away the winter chill without risk:

- Keep candles, kerosene lamps, and other open flames out of reach of children at all times.
- Do not put a space heater in a child's room.
- Teach children fire safety procedures, including how to spot potential hazards.
- Do not allow children to play in fires such as roasting marshmallows in a fireplace.
- Practice family fire drills to reinforce safe behavior.
- Do not use electric blankets for young children.

In Conclusion

By following the proper winter safety tips for children, parents can ensure that their sons and daughters will be warm, happy, and safe during the coldest months of the year, and seeing them enjoy winter safely will warm any parent's heart.

By Melissa Mayntz - <http://safety.lovetoknow.com>

How to Meet the Challenges of Winter Driving

Sheriff Mick Fink

Although the official start of winter this year is not until December 22, Wisconsin likely will be hit with the usual onslaught of ice, snow, and limited visibility that makes driving difficult, if not impossible, at times. To survive treacherous winter driving conditions, motorists must be patient and follow common-sense precautions.

When there's ice or snow, many motorists skid off the road or crash because they were driving too fast for conditions. The posted speed limits are for dry pavement, and those speeds may be hazardous when roads are slick. The slogan 'Snow Means Slow' also applies to four-wheel drive and other heavy duty vehicles, which need ample distance for stopping on slippery roads, just like other vehicles. A citation for driving too fast for conditions Wis.Stat.346.57(3) costs \$213.10 with four demerit points.

Winter weather also can limit visibility, so drivers must remove all frost, ice and snow from their

vehicle's windows. You must be able to see in all directions at all times to avoid crashes. Clearing only a small patch on a windshield or rear window is not sufficient. Clearing snow and ice from the lights, hood and roof also helps improve visibility and safety.

According to state law, a vehicle's windshield, side wings, and side and rear windows must be kept clear at all times Wis.Stat. 346.88(4). Violating this law costs \$175.30 with two demerit points assessed on the driver's record.

During severe winter storms, the wisest decision often is to stay put and not drive. Police officers frequently respond to vehicles in the ditch and chain-reaction crashes when there was no real need for the drivers to be on the road at all. Slowed or stalled traffic on slippery roads also delays snowplows and tow trucks that are trying to get the roads cleared.

To minimize the dangers of winter driving follow these safety tips:

- Always wear your seat belt even if traveling a short distance. You and your passengers absolutely need this protection even in low speed "fender-bender" collisions.
- Watch for slippery bridge decks. They ice up quicker than adjacent pavement.
- Look farther ahead than you normally do. Loss of traction and other actions by vehicles ahead of you will alert you sooner to upcoming slippery spots and other hazards.
- Brake early and correctly. It takes much longer to stop in adverse conditions.
- Don't pump anti-lock brakes. With anti-lock brakes, the correct braking method is to "stomp and steer."
- Don't be overconfident about the traction of four-wheel drive vehicles, which generally won't stop or grip the road in curves any better than two-wheel drive vehicles.
- Avoid cutting in front of trucks, which take longer than automobiles to slow down or stop.
- Leave plenty of room for snowplows. By law, you must stay back at least 200 feet from the rear of a snowplow.



One- and Two-Family Dwellings in Wisconsin Need Smoke Alarms & Carbon Monoxide Alarms

As of February 1, 2011, there are Wisconsin requirements for both smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms in almost all one- and two-family dwellings, regardless of the building's age. The new carbon monoxide safety net is for dwellings with fuel burning appliances, fireplaces or attached garages.

Owners and Renters Have Responsibilities

Owners are responsible for alarm installations and occupants have responsibility to maintain the alarms. Owners must repair or replace alarms within five days of written notice from an occupant or an inspector. Authorized inspectors may enter dwellings to inspect alarms when requested by owners or occupants. Tampering with alarms is illegal, dangerous, and can cause serious liability concerns.

Where and What Kinds?

Alarms must be installed in the basement, and on each floor level. The alarms need not be installed in attics, garages, or storage areas. The alarms may be separate or combination units, powered by batteries, or in the case of new construction, tied into the home's electrical system, interconnected with battery backup. Installation must follow manufacturers' instructions. The manufacturer should be identified on the alarm. Alarms used in Wisconsin must be approved by Underwriters Laboratories.

Save Lives and Property!

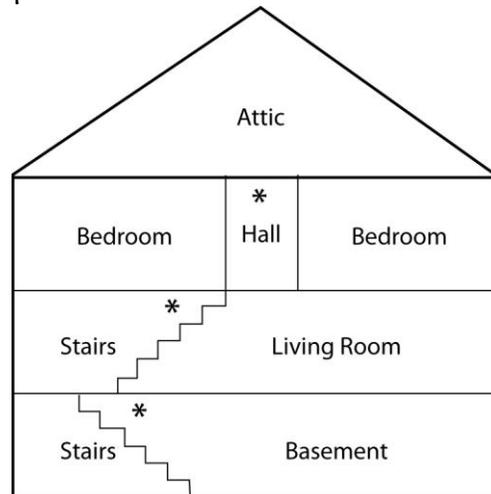
Smoke kills more people in residential fires than the flames. Smoke alarms detect the presence of smoke even before you can see it or smell it, especially when flames might not be in your line of sight. (There are alarms for people with visual or auditory disabilities.)

Carbon monoxide is a gas created by incomplete burning of fuels. Carbon monoxide is colorless, odorless and tasteless, but highly toxic. It can build up over time, with unrecognized symptoms, such as headaches, nausea, disorientation, or irritability eventually building to unconsciousness and fatal

poisoning. Carbon monoxide alarms warn of the gas before it reaches dangerous levels. Examples of some carbon monoxide sources are garages, heaters, fireplaces, furnaces, appliances or cooking sources using coal, wood, oil, kerosene, or other fuels. Electric appliances are not carbon monoxide sources.

Alarms Do Not Guarantee Safety

Alarms must be tested regularly and should have batteries changed at least annually, or when a low-battery warning sounds. The alarms must not be painted over and should be kept clean. Alarms should be replaced when they reach the end of their life span.



Install a smoke alarm and a carbon monoxide alarm (or combination alarms) in the basement and on each floor except the attic or storage area. See table below for additional requirements.

Multifamily Buildings

Buildings with more than two residential units also need smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. The installation requirements for those multifamily dwellings are different. Rules for alarms in multifamily dwellings and other public buildings are in the Wisconsin Commercial Building Code, Comm 61-66.

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/rsb/code/comm/comm060.html>

Source:

<http://commerce.wi.gov/SB/SB-UdcAlarmsInfo.html>

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Requirements	Battery-powered only	Building electrical system powered	Building power and battery backup	Interconnection between alarms	Alarms on every floor level	Alarms outside each sleeping area	Alarms in each bedroom
Smoke alarms in one- and 2-family dwellings before 4-1-92	✓				✓		
Smoke alarms in Uniform Dwelling Code after 4-1-92		✓		✓	✓		
Smoke alarms in Uniform Dwelling Code after 12-1-95		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Smoke alarms in Uniform Dwelling Code after 4-1-01			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Carbon monoxide alarms before 2-1-11	✓				✓		
Carbon monoxide alarms after 2-1-11		✓	✓	✓	✓		