



THE SPIRIT

U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion Minneapolis
Minnesota • North Dakota • South Dakota

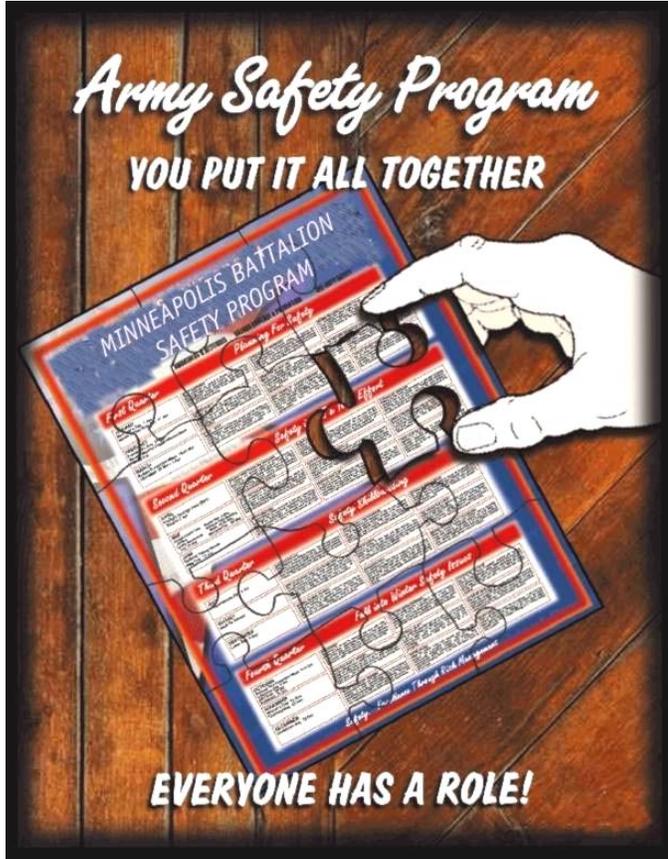
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U.S. ARMY

SPECIAL SAFETY ISSUE



Winter Safety

GETTING READY

Before bad weather sets in, check and repair, as needed, all the major systems on your car (battery and charging, ignition, fuel, cooling, exhaust, suspension, brakes, lights, and electrical). Check windshield wipers for wear, and replace them if needed. Fill up with windshield washer antifreeze solution. Be sure the heater and defroster work. Change oil and oil filter, and check all other engine filters, replacing as needed.

Check your owner's manual for winter starting techniques you may have forgotten, overlooked, or never read.

Check weather and road reports from the National Weather Service, state patrol, or other agencies so you can anticipate problems down the road.

DON'T OVERLOOK

To prevent winter accidents, you must take extra care to see and be seen. Clean all snow and ice off all the windows. Don't use the peephole approach. Wipe off your headlights and taillights. Remove snow from the hood and roof so it doesn't blow to the windshield and rear window.

While clearing the snow and ice, run your heater and defroster so the windows don't fog over suddenly when you start out.

KEEP GOING

Once underway, the biggest hazard you face is losing control of the car. On rain-slick or icy roads, you have, somehow, to keep your traction with the road. Once the tires lose contact, you've lost control.

Winter driving

By Ken Plant, Mpls Rctg Bn Safety Officer

On October 15th, Soldiers and civilians throughout the Army Recruiting Command will be getting together to train and prepare for winter safety. The following materials were researched by the Battalion Safety Officer for use during Safety Stand Down Day. It is recommended that these materials be printed, shared with family members, and saved in your emergency winter survival kit (article on page 3).

DRIVE CONTROL

Winter driving conditions can be inconvenient, annoying, and, at times, infuriating. You will be slowed down; count on it. The best advice is whenever winter conditions mess up the roads, decide very firmly that you will slow down. Resign yourself to the slower pace. Concentrate on driving. You can't control the weather or the actions of other drivers. You can control your own attitude and the manner in which you drive.

It takes more time and distance to do nearly everything when the road is wet or icy. So, allow more time to stop, turn, or do anything else. Stretch out the distance between you and the car ahead. Allow two or three times the distance you would on dry pavement. This gives you critical reaction time. An icy road is twice as slippery when the temperature is just at the freezing point as it is at zero.

DANGER SPOTS

Wet bridge and overpasses are frozen before and after other road surfaces. Shaded areas, like underpasses, can often be icy when other areas are not. Don't increase speed just because the road looks like it's drying out. Small icy patches can cause treacherous skids.

One basic driving rule is always adjust to conditions. In cold weather, this usually means reducing speed. In a fog or nighttime snowstorms, switch to low beam so there'll be less glare from reflected light. Even when temperatures are above freezing and a light drizzle is falling, adjust speed to allow for the oil film created by the water on dry pavement.

Under certain conditions, a thin film of ice will form on the road surface from the combination of fog or other condensation and sub-freezing road temperatures. This film, known as "black ice", is very difficult to detect while driving until you lose control. Be alert to these conditions.

PARKING TIP

Try to avoid parallel parking situations in snowy weather. It's harder to get going in snow when you have to turn the wheels to get out of a parking place.

BRAKING

You can stop with much greater assurance in winter if you anticipate slippery road surfaces. When you come up to stop signs, highway exit and entrance ramps, curves, yield signs, or anyplace where you may have to stop or slow down, start braking earlier than you would under clear and dry conditions.

A common mistake many drivers make on slippery surfaces is to hit the brakes instinctively when they see a problem ahead. This locks the wheels and takes away all steering control. The car will likely go into a skid.

You should become very familiar with the type of braking system of your vehicle and practice using those brakes in an empty parking lot. Read your vehicle manual. Leave plenty of distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you.

CONTROL

The major cause of skids are sudden changes in speed or direction resulting from braking, steering, or accelerating. When your car begins to swerve out of control, you may experience a split-second feeling of

helplessness. With a little know-how, you can regain control. For most cars, take your foot off the accelerator, but also keep it away from the brake pedal. Steer the car into the skid. That is, turn the steering wheel the way you want the car to go. If the rear end skids to the left, steer left to straighten it out, and right for right skids. Avoid oversteering or you can easily fishtail in the opposite direction before regaining control.

When steering out of a skid, hold the steering wheel firmly. Usually, just a few minor steering adjustments, combined with taking and keeping your foot off the brake and accelerator pedals, will do the trick.

For front wheel drive cars, the experts recommend that you do not take your foot off the gas, as the skid may get worse. Instead, speed up slightly to keep the rear wheels behind you (or take the car out of gear). The steering method is the same. Once in control, you can slow down to a safer speed.

To gain assurance in skid control, pick out a safe place with a fairly large area and a slippery surface, such as an empty parking lot (if you are certain there are no parking curbs, islands, or other obstacles). Drive around at low speed and cause your car to skid. You'll gain skill and confidence in handling this winter driving hazard.

GETTING UNSTUCK

You will get the best traction from reinforced tire chains. Snow tires are generally second best, with all-season tires third. Carry a small bag of sand or kitty litter in your trunk to give increased traction.

When surrounded by snow, try turning your wheels from side to side to push some of the snow out of the way. If you slide off the road into deep snow, dig out the drive wheels and clear a path ahead. Spread kitty litter and try, gently, to drive out.

If the tires fail to gain traction, add more fill to the path. Use broken branches, wood, or other material. In a true emergency, you might even look to sources such as interior carpeting, or other expedients, rather than sit in the freezing cold.

When starting on snow or ice, apply slow, steady pressure to the accelerator. Give the tires a chance to grip the snow. If you spin the wheels, you will create a slick, icy patch with no traction. When your tires start to take hold, don't rush things by accelerating. Pull out slowly and straight ahead whenever possible.

Two traction ideas you may have heard To Rock or Not can actually cause more problems than they solve. One is increasing weight in the trunk. Putting extra weight in your trunk can give you better traction, but too much weight can cost you in steering control and stopping distance. The tradeoff is not worth the risk in most cases.

The other is reducing tire pressure to increase traction. Here again, you can affect steering to a dangerous degree, and increase tire wear.



Auto winter emergency kits

BASIC WINTER EMERGENCY ITEMS

Package the following items in a small duffel bag and place on the floor behind driver or passengers seat...

- pocket knife
- spare ice scraper
- reflector triangle
- wool blanket
- flashlight
- boots and gloves
- first aid kit
- fire extinguisher
- winter emergency kit can (see article below)

Package the following items in a medium sized or several small duffel bags for your trunk or back of your SUV/ Van...

- kitty litter or sand
- small shovel
- battery jumper cables
- tow chain or rope
- spare wipers
- spare windshield wiper fluid
- tire chains
- basic tool box
- gas additive

COFFEE CAN SURVIVAL KIT

Here's your items to make a coffee can survival kit to add to your emergency duffel bag...

- 2 or 3 pound coffee can (punch 3 holes at the top of can, equal distance apart)
- 60-inch length of wire (cut into 3 equal pieces - used to suspend can)
- 3 large safety pins (twist wire to safety pins and pin to car roof interior to suspend can over candle)
- 1 candle 2" diameter (place on lid under suspended can for melting snow)

- 1 pocket knife, reasonably sharp (or substitute with scissors)
- 3 pieces of bright cloth 2" wide x 36" long (tie to antenna or door handle)
- Several packets of soup, hot chocolate, tea, bouillon cubes, etc. (mixed into melted snow to provide warmth and nutrition)
- 1 small package of peanuts (provides protein) & fruit-flavored candy (orange slices, jelly beans, etc.-avoid chocolate)
- 1 pair of athletic socks (cotton) and 1 pair of glove liners (cotton)
- 2 packages of book matches
- 1 sun shield blanket or 2 large green or black plastic leaf bags (to reflect body heat)
- 1 pen light and batteries (keep separate)

When complete, place blaze orange stocking cap over kit and carry in duffel bag with other safety items in back of car, van, SUV, or behind seat in truck. If you have a 3-pound can, you will still have additional room for Band-Aids, aspirin, small radio, etc. If there is still room left, increase the quantity of any of the above items or improvise items you feel might be necessary. Hypothermia, rapid loss of body temperature, can happen to anyone. Stay in your car until help arrives.

STRANDED

If you are stuck far from help, keep these tips in mind...

If it's dark, stay near your vehicle. Don't walk for help at night unless you know where you're going and the help is near.

Even in daylight, in severe weather it may be better to hunker down in survival fashion than to risk exposure to the elements. If you can stay reasonably warm inside the vehicle without running the engine, do so. But if severe cold threatens, you may be better off making a survival shelter nearby. Many people have frozen to death in their cars when the very snowbank that held them could have provided the shelter necessary for survival.

If you do stay inside the car, be sure, first, that the exhaust pipe is clear of snow to prevent exhaust vapors from backing up inside. Keep a window cracked for ventilation, and run the engine and heater in 10-minute intervals rather than continuously.

Carry with you the tools of survival. Keep a car kit that holds the kitty litter or sand, small shovel, batter jumper cables, tow chain or rope, spare ice scraper, gas additive, spare wipers, road flares, tire chains, wool blanket, flashlight, boots and gloves, first aid kit, and basic toolbox (with pocket knife).

In addition to the basic emergency kit, package the following for extreme conditions:

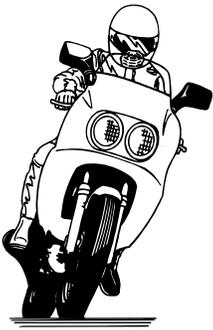
- firemaking materials
- large waterproof tarp
- high-energy food snacks
- small nesting cookpots
- spare knife and hatchet
- small radio, extra batteries

- hand-held (CB) radio, or emergency cell phone
- extra warm clothes, blankets or sleeping bags
- two 3 lb coffee cans

To be totally prepared, keep a second box holding a winter-survival kit that includes firemaking materials (candles, waterproof matches, fuel such as charcoal, lighter and lighter fluid), large waterproof tarp, small nesting cookpots, spare knife and hatchet, small radio and extra batteries, hand-held citizen's band (CB) radio, extra warm clothes, extra blankets or sleeping bags, limited canned or packaged food (high-energy, non-perishable) such as canned nuts and dried fruit. Pack most of these in two 3-pound coffee cans - one to hold candles or charcoal for heat, and one for excrement.

Motorcycle riding in the winter

If you plan to ride a motorcycle in the winter, the best advice I can give you is to reconsider it. If you must ride, I strongly encourage you to attend a motorcycle training course. If you are a soldier, it is mandatory. If you ride, you know you're required to wear a helmet, eye protection, and suitable protective clothing at all times.



This is both on and off post for soldiers and on post or on official duty off post for civilian employees. To ride in the winter, buy and wear adequate riding gear. Wind chill will sap you of your warmth in minutes.

Even more than drivers of cars, you want to be as visible as possible. Use as much reflective clothing as you can, keep your lights on, and wear the motorcycle reflective vest at all times. Make sure you keep reflective clothing and markings uncovered. Remember that road conditions affect you more than cars. Expect ice or black ice on foggy mornings, on shady stretches, on most residential and rural roads, and on parking lots.

If you are a Soldier and are planning on using a four wheeler to haul in your deer or for recreation, you are also required to have a motorcycle safety certificate. Contact the battalion safety officer or myself to schedule a class.

Cold injury prevention

Cold weather presents hazards to people to include carbon monoxide, hypothermia, whiteout, frostbite, heat exhaustion, trench foot, and snowblindness.

CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon Monoxide is a gas you can't see, smell, or taste. It is generated by almost any kind of burning or combustion. Symptoms of overexposure include headache, pounding of the heart, vision problems, dizziness, and mental lapses or confusion. It can lead to unconsciousness and death. Avoid running engines or using charcoal grills or unvented heaters in closed areas. Make sure any time you are burning any kind of fuel, there is a source of intake air and a clear exhaust path to the open air.

HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia is lowered body temperature from exposure to cold. Anything that increases this heat loss speeds up hypothermia. Symptoms include shivering, loss of clear thinking, stupor, muscular stiffness or rigidity, ultimately heart and lung failure and death. It is vital to you in the cold that you stay dry, block the wind, use warm insulated or layered clothing, and avoid exhaustion. It doesn't have to be bitter cold for hypothermia to happen to you. Early symptoms include a general feeling of being cold (especially if your inside stomach area feels cold) and uncontrollable shivering.

As hypothermia progresses, your pulse becomes weak, your speech may be slurred, and your movements stiff or uncoordinated. The combination of rain and wind can kill you even at 55 degrees Fahrenheit. The only treatment for hypothermia I'm going to provide you is to get the person trained in medical help.

Field treatments by untrained people are often ineffective and only delay getting proper treatment. Never give alcohol to a person with suspected hypothermia. On the way to treatment, if you have warm liquids, you can give them gradually if your victim is conscious. If the clothing is wet, and you have warm, dry clothes available, this may also help.

WHITEOUT

Whiteout refers to conditions where fog or snow in the air combine with snow or ice on the ground to merge into a thick white blanket of zero visibility. This can happen while walking or driving. Try to stay out of potential whiteout weather. If you're walking, stop and seek shelter. If driving, park in a safe area away from the traveled part of the road.

FROSTBITE

Frostbite is freezing a body part. It can happen any time parts of the body are exposed to temperatures of 32 degrees or less. Symptoms include an uncomfortable aching, tingling, or stinging. The skin first turns red, then pale gray or waxy white. In cases of deep frostbite, get medical attention as soon as possible. Don't rub affected areas with snow. Don't expose the skin to hot air (such as engine exhaust), open fires, hair dryers, or the like. Warm with lukewarm liquids, warm drinks, skin to skin contact, or other gentle methods.

To prevent frostbite, wear sufficient clothes, keep dry, and use the buddy system to watch each other. Avoid tight clothes, shoes, socks, or gloves. Avoid getting wet

from perspiration or other sources. Exercise finger, toe, and face muscles.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

Heat Exhaustion and dehydration can happen in the coldest weather. It happens especially when wearing the layered clothes you need to stay warm and dry. The clothes and the dry air rapidly absorb perspiration. The cold, dry air also soaks up moisture from the mouth, nose, and eyes. Symptoms include parched, dry mouth; difficulty in swallowing, nausea, faintness, dizziness, and vomiting. Victims are tired, with muscle cramps. Eyes don't focus well. To treat, keep victims warm, but loosen their clothing. Gradually feed warm liquids. Don't let victims eat snow; the snow absorbs body heat, sending the victim towards hypothermia. Get them to rest, and get medical attention as soon as possible.

Trench Foot is caused by prolonged standing in water or having wet feet for hours with temperatures somewhat above freezing. Symptoms include pale or numb feet and toes, difficulty in walking, and possibly red, swollen, warm skin in advanced cases. In some instances, the flesh dies and amputation is needed. Wear loose, layered socks in good-fitting boots. When your feet get wet, dry them as soon as possible. Remember also to wipe the inside of your shoes/boots. Exercise your feet.

SNOWBLINDNESS

Snowblindness is caused by the reflection of the sun's ultraviolet rays on white snow or ice. It can be very painful. It can occur even in light mist or fog. Symptoms are a feeling of grit in the eyes; pain made worse by moving the eyeballs; watery, red eyes; headache; and increased pain in the light. In most cases, it can be prevented by wearing sunglasses. Don't wait for discomfort before putting them on. Wear sunglasses in sunny weather whenever you are in snow or ice. First aid consists of blindfolding or covering the eyes with a damp cloth. Rest is needed. Protect with dark bandages or very dark sunglasses if exposure to light is unavoidable. Snowblindness heals in a few days, normally without any permanent damage.

Winter sports injury prevention

By Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources

Hunting is the most popular recreational sport in MN, ND and SD. Taking a hunting safety course is a good

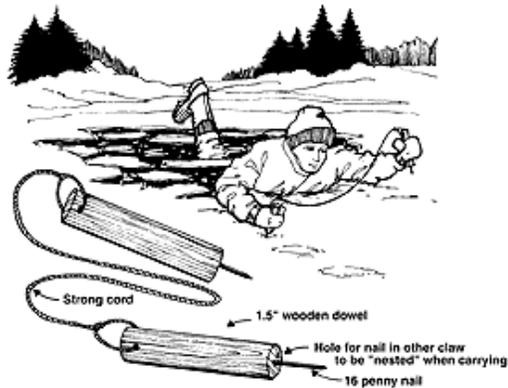


idea for the whole family, even if you don't shoot. Knowing how to handle firearms and learning respect for

guns makes good safety sense. Downhill and cross country skiing, snow mobiling, and snow shoeing are also popular sports in MN, ND and SD. Both downhill and cross country skiing are widely publicized. The best possible accident prevention measure you can take is to take lessons before attempting any of these sports. Use reliable equipment and don't let yourself or those you're with consume alcohol while participating in these activities or before driving home. Save the drinks for the lodge.

Sledding and tubing are also popular in winter sports. They are also activities that produce fatalities and serious injuries with each major snowfall. These happen especially among young people. To lessen the chances of serious injury, choose an area reserved for coasting. Avoid streets, sidewalks, wooded areas, and icy slopes. Never hitch a ride or allow anyone else to hook onto your vehicle. Use common courtesy on hills to avoid collisions.

Skating and ice fishing are also very popular sports in MN, ND and SD. When outside, do not skate on ice unless it is uniformly solid and at least 4 inches thick. Don't skate alone, but don't let everyone gather on one spot. Have some kind of rescue devices (rope, ladder, warm clothes, and liquids) on the scene whenever you go skating on ponds or lakes. For ice fishing, always know and obey the state and local fishing regulations. Be sure the ice is safe before venturing out, with or without a vehicle.



ICE CLAWS

1999 MN Dept. of Natural Resources

ICE CLAWS

The winter's first ice is already skimming Minnesota lakes and ponds and with it comes ice tragedy season. Every year we hear of people drowning because they broke through ice they thought was safe. We think to ourselves, "If I fell through, I'd just climb back onto the solid ice and be just fine." Unfortunately, this can be much easier said than done. First, when you fall through the ice, you're taken by surprise (if you knew you were going to break through, you wouldn't have walked there in the first place, right?) The sudden shock of your body plunging into freezing water adds to the confusion and panic. Cold water saps body heat 25 times faster than air of the same temperature. Just try holding your hand

in a sink full of ice water for more than a few seconds and you'll see what I mean.

Then comes the difficult task of pulling oneself out of the cold water onto the surface of the wet and slippery ice. Unless you have a plan of action for just such emergencies, your chances of getting out safely can be pretty slim.

To increase your chances for surviving a sudden icy dip, you can purchase a set of commercially made ice rescue picks or "claws" or, if you have a few simple tools and a little skill in the workshop, you can make a set for a couple of dollars for materials.

- Get two 4" pieces of wooden doweling the size of a broom handle or a little larger. Whatever material you select, it should float in case you drop the claws while struggling.
- Drive a stout nail into one end of each dowel.
- Use a file to sharpen the nail heads to a point.
- Drill a hole into the dowels (in the end opposite the nail) and tie a length of strong cord through the hole so a pick is on each end "jump-rope" fashion. You may also drill a hole in the ends alongside the nails so the nail on the other pick can nest in the hole, keeping both points covered. Keep the picks in your pocket for quick emergency access if you or a companion do break through. Splashdown! If you do break through, try to remain calm. Turn in the water towards the direction you came from - that is probably the strongest ice. Dig the points of the picks into the ice and while vigorously kicking your feet, pull yourself onto the surface by sliding forward on the ice.

Roll away from the area of weak ice. Rolling on the ice will distribute your weight to help avoid breaking through again. Get to shelter, heat, warm dry clothing and warm, non-alcoholic, and non-caffeinated drinks. Call 911 and seek medical attention if you feel disoriented, have uncontrollable shivering, or have any other ill effects that may be symptoms of hypothermia, (the life-threatening drop in the body's core temperature.)

If your buddy breaks through, first tell them to "Stay calm" and that "We'll get you out of there in a second." Then throw them the picks and explain how to use them. Remember that by kicking their feet, the thrust of the kicks can help push them back onto the solid ice.

Holiday season accident prevention

PLANTS, CANDLES AND DECORATIONS

Place holiday plants out of the reach of small children and pets. A poinsettia plant contains a burning juice that can irritate a child's digestive system. Holly and mistletoe berries are poisonous. Other decorative plants are often toxic as well.

Put candles in sturdy holders, and keep paper, plastics, fabric, and evergreen branches well away. Never leave a burning candle unattended, and remember to keep matches and lighters in a safe place. Use artificial snow and angel hair with caution. They can

cause lung and eye irritation. Rubber gloves may help when arranging angel hair.

Use only textiles or paper decorations that have been suitably flameproofed. Even flameproof materials are not necessarily fireproof. Unless you know the materials to be actually fireproof, decorations will not be used closer than 18 inches to electrical fixtures, heating equipment, or stovepipes. Hanging streamers will not be less than 7 1/2 feet off the floor. Take precautions to prevent any such decorations from coming into contact with any source of fire.

CHRISTMAS TREES

When buying a natural Christmas tree, make sure it's fresh. To check for freshness, bounce tree trunk sharply on the ground. The needles shouldn't drop off. Leave trees exposed to the weather until ready to bring in to decorate. Cut off an inch or two of the tree base to expose fresh fiber. Water the tree frequently. A fresh tree will absorb up to a quart of water a day. The heat in your home will speed up the process of evaporation. Commercial preservatives can be effective but should be used with a fresh tree with adequate water.

Your tree holder should have a wide base to prevent tipping and be designed for the size of your tree. Your tree holder must be a type the tree will stand in water at all times. Place the tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces, portable heaters, and baseboard heaters. A tree should never block a door, hall, or stairway used as an emergency exit.

Check tree lights carefully. Look for broken bulbs, loose sockets, and frayed wires. Don't overload extension cords. Position tree lights so the bulbs do not touch the branches. Keep electric wires away from the tree's water supply. Don't put electric lights on an artificial tree until you've checked the tree manufacturer's instructions. Some manufacturers have specific instructions on the size and type of lights to use.

Always check ornaments before putting them on the tree. Remember to keep access through the presents and decorations for watering the tree. Position fragile ornaments, heirlooms, and ornaments with small pieces out of the reach of small children. Burning candles on trees create an extreme fire hazard.

KITCHEN SAFETY

Many home injuries and fires occur in the kitchen. You can control unnecessary kitchen hazards by understanding and following some basic principles. Electricity and water don't mix. Keep plugs, wires, and other electrical items well away from faucets, sinks, damp cloths, and spills. Be sure all cord plugs are placed firmly into outlets. Avoid overloading outlets. If you need extra outlets, try to redistribute the appliance connections, or perhaps locate smaller appliances in other areas.

Use pots and pans that are big enough for the job, both for easier handling and for fire prevention. Too small containers lead to spills and overflows. Disposable roasting pans need to be heavy enough to hold the full weight of the food you cook in them without

bending or breaking. Check the labels. As a precaution, layer such pans, or put a baking sheet underneath. Keep oven mitts or pot holders close at hand. Don't place or store these or plastic utensils, paper towels, and other noncooking items on or near the range.

Be prepared to handle grease fires. Make sure everyone gets out. On the range top, turn off the heat, and cover the pan with a sufficiently large lid. To do this, push the lid at the fire smoothly from the front and down onto the pan. For oven fires, close the door and turn off the heat. **DO NOT** try to carry a pan of burning or hot grease outside or to the sink. The hot grease can easily spill and spread the fire or cause severe burns. Make sure you have turned off the burner. Immediately call 911. The heat needed to start the fire may have caused or still be causing other problems.

After calling, let the pan cool in place. Never use water on a grease fire -- it scatters the flames. Consider keeping a container of baking soda labeled "For grease fires." Baking soda can be an effective alternative if you don't have a lid for the pan. Sprinkle it carefully over the burning surface. Don't dump it on as this can also spread the burning grease.

Don't leave young children alone in the kitchen. Don't store items that could attract children (such as cookies or candy) over the top of ranges. Store knives up and away from play areas. Keep knives separate from serving pieces in separate child-locked drawers, or invest in a knife rack or lock kept well out of the reach of small children. Turn handles of pots and pans inward toward the center of the range, preventing bumps and



hot spills.

Try to avoid reaching across hot burners on gas ranges. Roll up or otherwise fasten long, loose sleeves. They catch handles and are more likely to catch on fire. Develop a personal routine to check yourself and others for turning off the oven, stove burners, and other appliances when not needed.

Keep constant watch over any cooking that is required above the "keep warm" setting. Do not leave the kitchen area unattended while cooking, especially when the burner is turned to higher settings.

FIREPLACES AND WOOD STOVES

If you're planning to use a wood burning fireplace or stove, make sure the chimney or stack has been checked, and cleaned if needed this year. Always use a screen or doors on fireplaces and woodstoves. Never leave a small child unattended in a room with a burning

fire or hot woodstove. Keep matches out of the reach of children.

Don't use your fireplace to dispose of holiday wrapping paper. Coated paper especially can flare out of control, giving off intense heat and hot ash. Some catalytic wood stoves can be damaged by the high heat and chemical content of these papers. Chimneys or pipes with creosote buildup can be readily ignited from the higher heat.



Evergreen branches or wreaths have a high content of pitch, which burns extremely hot and is very difficult to control. Embers from burning evergreen needles can cause fires to start inside your home and on your roof.

Do not burn plastics. Most will give off toxic gases. Do not burn cut up pallets or ammunition boxes. Most have wood preservatives or other toxic chemicals that can harm you or others when burned.

October is National Fire Safety Month

Tips for installing your smoke alarms correctly
By the National Fire Protection Association

Install smoke alarms Listed (examined and tested to appropriate product safety standards) by a qualified testing laboratory on every level of your home, including the basement (but not unfinished attics). Make sure there is an alarm in or near every sleeping area. Mount the smoke alarms high on ceilings or walls – remember, smoke rises. Ceiling-mounted alarms should be installed at least four inches away from the nearest wall; wall-mounted alarms should be installed four to 12 inches away from the ceiling. Don't install smoke alarms near windows, outside doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation. Don't paint your smoke alarms; paint or other decorations could keep them from working when you most need it.

Tips for keeping your smoke alarms working properly
Test your smoke alarms at least once a month by using the alarms' "test button." Never use an open-flame device to test the alarm as you could burn yourself or start a fire. If the smoke alarm manufacturer's instructions permit the use of an aerosol smoke product for testing the smoke alarm, only use one that has been Listed by a third-party product testing agency, and utilize it in accordance with the product instructions.

Replace the batteries in your smoke alarms once a year, or as soon as the alarm "chirps," warning that the battery is low. Schedule battery replacements for the same day you change

your clock from daylight to standard time in the fall. Regularly vacuuming or dusting your smoke alarm following manufacturer's instructions can help keep it working properly. Replace your smoke alarms once every 10 years.

Never "borrow" a battery from a smoke alarm. Make sure that everyone in your home can hear and recognize the sound of the alarm and knows how to react immediately.

Home fire escape plans

Developing and practicing a home fire escape plan that everyone understands can mean the difference between life and death. Fire can grow and spread through your home very quickly. It's important that you be prepared to react as soon as the smoke alarm sounds. These tips can help you put together— and practice — an effective home fire escape plan. Pull together everyone in your household and make a plan. Draw a floor plan of your home, showing two ways out of each room, including windows. Don't forget to mark the location of each smoke alarm. Test all smoke alarms (Listed by a qualified testing laboratory) monthly to ensure that they work. Make sure that everyone understands the escape plan. Are the escape routes clear? If windows or doors in your home have security bars, make sure that the bars have quick- release mechanisms so that they can be opened immediately in an emergency. Practice the escape plan at least twice a year, making sure that everyone is involved – from kids to grandparents. Agree on an outside meeting place where everyone can meet after



they've escaped. Remember to get out first, then call for help. Have everyone memorize the emergency phone number of the fire department. Be fully prepared for a real fire: when a smoke alarm sounds, get out immediately. And once you're out, stay out – leave the firefighting to the professionals! If you live in an apartment building, make sure that you're familiar with the building's evacuation plan. In case of a fire, use the stairs, never the elevator. Tell guests or visitors to your home about your family's fire escape plan. When visiting other people's homes, ask about their escape plan.

Drinking and driving

Don't combine holiday drinking and driving. Alcohol is immediately absorbed into the bloodstream, and within minutes it settles into various organs- particularly the brain - where it depresses the central nervous system, and causes both physical and mental changes. Coordination and reflexes slow. Judgment is dulled. Ability to see colors is reduced, and eyes can't focus as quickly. The brain can't judge distances as accurately.

Black coffee, fresh air, a cold shower, a walk around the block, and other traditional "sobering" techniques have no effect on the alcohol content in the blood. If you've been

Friends Know...



When To Say "I'll Drive Tonight!"

drinking, don't drive. If you travel with other adults, make one person the designated driver in your party. The designated driver agrees not to drink and to drive everyone else home.

If you are hosting a party and have been serving alcohol, do not let anyone drive who may have had too much. You may find yourself held partially responsible for their subsequent behavior.



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