

MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

"WINTER SAFETY"

Part of the "GENERAL SAFETY SERIES"

OUTLINE OF MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

The following outline summarizes the major points of information presented in the program. The outline can be used to review the program before conducting a classroom session, as well as in preparing to lead a class discussion about the program.

- **The change of seasons often sneaks up on us. It seems that one moment we're working under the autumn sunlight, and the next we're watching the first snowfall and listening for school closings.**
- **The onset of winter is also a "busy time" for everyone.**
 - Schedules get crowded.
 - Deadlines creep up on us.
 - There are holidays and vacations to prepare for.
 - Amid all this activity, we often forget to make room for safety.
- **Of course, we should always be on the lookout for problems, and try to avoid dangerous situations.**
 - But as winter approaches, there are additional hazards to watch out for.
- **As soon as you feel that first blast of cold air on your cheeks you'll remember the first rule of winter safety... "stay warm".**
- **Dress for the season. Layering your clothing traps your body's heat, and insulates you from the cold.**
 - You should wear a water-repellant outer shell in rain or snow.
 - Complete your wardrobe with a hat and a warm pair of gloves or mittens.
- **Cold weather often results in slippery surfaces, which can lead to falls.**
 - Prevent slipping by picking out shoes and boots with rough treads.
 - Take small steps and watch out for "slick spots".

- **You can help to prevent slipping accidents at home by keeping your driveway and sidewalks clear of snow and ice.**
 - Be careful of back-strain when you're shoveling.
 - Reduce potential problems by lifting the snow with your legs, not your back.
 - Don't overdo it. If your muscles begin to tighten up, take a "stretching break" to keep yourself from cramping.

- **Spread salt on walks and steps to melt any ice.**
 - Remember, salting before it snows can reduce the need for shoveling as well as prevent ice from forming.

- **If you're responsible for helping to keep your workplace safe in icy and snowy weather, the same principles apply.**
 - Make a list of parking lots and walkways that need to be kept clear.
 - Check on them regularly to make sure they are cleaned off and hazard-free.

- **If you've ever ventured out after a winter storm, you know how treacherous the roads can be.**
 - Cold weather driving can be made easier by preparing your car for the season, and by adjusting your driving habits.

- **For smoother starting and easier running, be sure to get your car a "tune-up".**
 - Don't forget to have the brakes and shock absorbers checked out.
 - Inspect your tires -- get new ones if the treads are worn.
 - Replace the windshield wipers if they show signs of wear.
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- **Make sure your radiator is filled with the appropriate coolant or antifreeze, and that you have a good supply of wiper fluid (it can get used up quickly trying to keep your windshield clear.)**

- **Stock your car with emergency supplies. Bring along:**
 - Extra antifreeze.
 - A set of jumper cables.
 - A small shovel.
 - Some salt or sand to provide traction if you get stuck.
- **You should also pack:**
 - A flashlight.
 - A blanket.
 - Reflectors.
 - Flares or an emergency light.
- **Before driving in icy or snowy conditions, listen to the radio, watch TV, or check your favorite internet weather site for the latest on road conditions.**
 - You should only go out if the roads are safe for travel.
 - Don't rush.
 - Allow yourself extra time to get where you're going...and drive cautiously.
- **To increase your visibility, clear the snow from your windows, headlights and side mirrors.**
- **You can prevent snow from blowing back onto your windshield or the drivers behind you by brushing off your roof and hood (in many places it's the law).**
 - This is especially important if you're driving a van or some other type of truck, since they can carry a lot more snow than a car.
 - Once you're ready, buckle up and get on your way.
- **When you're out on the road, drive defensively.**
 - Be alert, and anticipate possible problems.
 - Reduce your speed, so you have more time to react to poor road conditions.
 - Slow down if you have to make a sharp turn (otherwise, you may find yourself quickly spinning out of control).

- **If you need to stop, apply your brakes gradually.**
 - This will help you to keep your car under control.
- **Keep in mind that other drivers may not do so well in the snow.**
 - Give yourself time to stop by increasing the normal "following distance" between you and the driver in front of you.
- **Be prepared to react if you find your car beginning to skid.**
 - Do not slam on the brakes (this will lock up your wheels and make it harder to steer).
 - Stay calm.
 - Take your foot off the gas pedal and steer the car in the direction that you want it to go.
- **The best way to stay safe on snowy and icy roads is to stay off them.**
 - So if the roads are in bad shape and you don't have to go somewhere...stay home!
- **And remember, having a 4-wheel or all-drive vehicle doesn't exempt you from winter driving problems.**
 - It's still easy to "slip and slide!"
- **If you're working outside in the cold, there are precautions you need to take as well.**
- **Again, make sure you're dressed for the weather.**
 - "Layering" your clothes is always a good idea.
 - But be careful to keep hydrated, and monitor your energy level (it's easy to sweat away important fluids and minerals, even in chilly weather).
 - And working in heavy clothing can tire you out quickly.

- **Tools and equipment can behave differently in the cold too.**
 - Metal often gets brittle, and can break or fracture more easily.
 - Controls can be harder to operate and adjust.
 - And remember, skin "sticks" to metal when it's cold, so keep your gloves on if at all possible.

- **Of course winter weather isn't all gloom and doom.**
 - It also provides plenty of opportunities for us to have some fun!
 - Playing in the snow is something people of any age can enjoy.

- **But whether you're out by yourself or with the kids, you need to be careful.**
 - If you're sledding, make sure there's plenty of room to stop at the bottom of the hill.
 - Stay away from clear or icy patches.
 - Avoid "run-ins" with bushes, trees, and other obstacles.
 - And keep out of the street!
 - Be considerate of those around you.
 - And remember, adult supervision is always a good idea if kids are involved.

- **A fresh snowfall can also lead to snowball fights.**
 - Have fun, but be careful...it's easy for someone to get hurt.
 - Don't aim for the head, and make sure your snowballs don't contain any ice or stones.

- **Once you're ready to come in from the cold, there's nothing like warming up in front of a roaring fire... if your fireplace is safe, that is.**
 - To help prevent problems, have your chimney professionally cleaned at least once a year (without a good scrubbing the soot inside can start a fire you may not be able to control).
 - To prevent burning embers from finding their way into your living room, keep a sturdy screen in front of the fireplace.

- **Space heaters are another way lots of people keep warm. Be careful though.**
 - You need to position them at least three feet from combustible surfaces, such as curtains and walls.
 - Be sure to use the correct fuel.

- Putting gasoline in a kerosene heater can result in a fire, or even an explosion.

- **In addition to having to cope with cold weather, wintertime can also mean big time decorating.**
- **If you put up a tree and are using a natural one this year, be sure it's healthy.**
 - Bend the needles, to make sure they aren't dried up and brittle.
 - Bounce a pre-cut tree on the ground ((if the needles fall off easily, it's another sign that the tree is too dry).
 - Examine the trunk (a freshly cut tree will have sap on the bottom).
- **When you've made your selection, put the tree in your trunk, or tie it securely to the roof, to get it home.**
- **Set the tree up in a sturdy stand.**
 - You should add some preservative to the tree's daily supply of water (it will extend the life of the tree and make it more fire-resistant, too!)
- **If you're using lights, make sure they're UL approved.**
 - Test the lights before putting them on the tree.
 - Replace any defective bulbs and fuses.
 - Look for frayed wiring, a cracked plug or loose sockets.
 - If you find anything wrong, throw the string away (don't try to tape it up; the money that you save isn't worth risking a fire.)
- **Hiding an extension cord under a rug may make your living room look a little neater, but it's also a fire hazard.**
 - So don't do it.

- **And don't create an electrical "octopus" either.**
 - Limit the number of plugs per outlet.
 - Too many lights and appliances plugged into the same place can overload your circuits and start a fire.
- **Any lights and other electric decorations that you use outside should be UL listed for outdoor use.**
 - Make sure that everything is securely attached.
 - Be careful if you have to climb a ladder to put things up.
- **When you're not there to enjoy them, you should unplug both your indoor and outdoor lights.**
 - Use light timers for your regular lights if you're worried that burglars will be tipped off that you're not home.
- **Candles are also a part of many winter holiday celebrations. But they too must be kept away from things that can catch fire.**
 - Don't place burning candles near decorations or trees.
 - Never leave a lit candle unattended.
 - Be sure to keep matches out of the reach of children, as well.
- **If a problem does occur with the lights or candles you're using, an "early warning" can often save lives. That's where smoke detectors come in.**
 - You should have at least one detector on each level of your home.
 - Test them weekly and change the batteries once a year.
- **You should also keep a multi-purpose fire extinguisher in an easily accessible place.**
 - Make sure your entire family knows where it is, and how to use it.
- **Prepare an escape plan, so in case of a fire everyone knows how to exit quickly and safely from any room in the house.**
- **Once our homes are decorated, many of us will invite people over.**
 - These gatherings can be a lot of fun.
 - But whether you're a guest or a host, you have a responsibility to celebrate the season safely.

- **Holiday "get togethers" always have good food and conversation, and often, alcohol.**
 - But whenever alcohol is around, it's important to drink responsibly.
 - If you're going to a party, designate a driver so that your group can all get home safely.

- **If you're the driver, this doesn't mean that you should drink less than your friends.**
 - It means that you should not drink alcohol at all.

- **If you're hosting a party and serving alcohol, there are several things to remember.**
 - When you're serving an alcoholic punch, use a non-carbonated base, like fruit juice (this will slow down the bloodstream's ability to absorb the alcohol).
 - Along with alcohol, you should always have something to eat as well (having food in your stomach also helps to slow the rate at which the body absorbs alcohol).
 - Don't forget to have non-alcoholic beverages on hand for the designated drivers and others who don't want to drink.

- **To prevent the urge to have "one for the road", close the bar down at least an hour before the party ends.**
 - Encourage people to have some of those non-alcoholic beverages before they go.

- **Your responsibility as a host doesn't end as people begin to leave.**
 - Never let anyone drive home if they've had too much to drink.
 - Put them on a bus or call a taxi, but don't let them get behind the wheel.
 - If none of these options are available, have them stay overnight.
 - Hosts definitely don't want their guests driving drunk.

- **If you're out and about during the holidays and suspect that another driver is under the influence, stay out of their way.**
 - Pull over or take an alternate route home.
 - Use your cell phone to report anyone you see driving erratically to the police.
 - You just might save someone else "down the road".

- **Unlike us, accidents don't take holidays.**
 - But there are things that we can do to keep ourselves, and others, safe all winter long.

*****SUMMARY*****

- **Dress for the season. Insulate yourself from the cold... and don't forget your hat and gloves.**
- **Shovel the snow from your driveway and sidewalks. But remember not to over do it.**
- **Winterize your car. Don't forget those emergency supplies.**
- **Drive cautiously on snow and ice. Always maintain a safe following distance.**
- **Avoid fire hazards. Be careful with fireplaces, space heaters and holiday lights.**
- **Remember to celebrate with care. Don't drink too much, and never allow anyone to drive under the influence.**
- **There's no mystery to staying safe during the winter. If you stay on the lookout for hazards, and "think safety," you can put potential accidents in a "deep freeze".**