

WINTER SAFETY

COURSE OUTLINE

- **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 of this activity, we often forget to make room for safety.**
 - We should always be on the lookout for dangerous situations and try to avoid them.
 - During the winter months there are additional hazards to watch out for.
- **As soon as you feel that first blast of cold air on your cheeks you should remember that the first rule of winter safety is "stay warm".**
- **Dress for the season.**
 - Layering your clothing holds in your body's heat and insulates you from the cold.
 - In the rain and snow you should wear a water-repellant outer shell as well.
 - Complete your wardrobe with a hat and a warm pair of gloves or mittens.
- **But keeping warm isn't the only "winter concern".**
 - Cold weather and icy conditions create slippery surfaces that can lead to falls.
- **You can help to prevent slipping by wearing shoes and boots with rough treads.**
 - Take small steps and watch out for "slick spots".
- **To prevent slipping accidents at home keep your driveway and sidewalks clear of snow and ice.**

- **You can avoid back strain while snow shoveling by pushing with the shovel, using it like a plow instead of lifting.**
 - To make lifting easier and safer, use a smaller shovel, and lift with your leg muscles, not your back.
- **Don't overdo it when you're shoveling.**
 - If your muscles begin to tighten up, take a "stretching break" to prevent cramping.
 - Pace yourself.
 - Take a break now and then.
- **More heart attacks occur when shoveling snow than with any other winter activity.**
- **Spread salt on walks and steps to melt any ice. And remember, salting before it snows can:**
 - Prevent ice from forming.
 - Reduce the need for shoveling.
- **If you're responsible for helping to keep your workplace safe in icy and snowy weather, the same principles apply.**
 - Make a list of walkways and parking lots 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 adjusting your driving habits.
- **For smoother starting and easier running, get your car a "tune up".**
 - Don't forget to have the brakes and shock absorbers checked out.
 - Inspect your tires and replace them if the treads are worn.
 - Replace worn-out windshield wipers as well.
- **Make sure your radiator is filled with the appropriate coolant or antifreeze, and that you have a good supply of wiper fluid.**
 - Cleaner can get used up quickly when you're trying to keep your windshield clear.

- **Stock your car with emergency supplies.**
 - Bring along extra antifreeze, a set of jumper cables, a small shovel, and some salt or sand to provide traction if you get stuck.
 - You should also pack a flashlight, blanket, reflectors, and flares or an emergency light.
- **Before driving in ice or snow, check the weather forecast as well as traffic conditions to make sure that it's safe to head out.**
- **To increase your ability to see and be seen, 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 as well.**
 - In many places this is required by law.
 - It's 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.**
 - Don't rush.
 - Allow yourself extra time to get where you're going.
 - Be cautious.
- **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.**
 - If you don't, you may find yourself quickly spinning out of control.
- **When stopping, 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 additional time to stop by increasing the normal "following distance" between you and the driver in front of you.

- **Be prepared to react if your car starts 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 of the skid.
- **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 absolutely have to go somewhere, stay home!
- **Remember, having a 4-wheel or all-wheel drive vehicle does not exempt you from winter driving problems.**
 - It's still easy to "slip and slide"!
- **If you're working outside in the cold, there are some precautions you need to take as well.**
 - Make sure you're dressed for the weather.
 - Layering your clothes is always a good idea.
- **Be careful to keep hydrated, and monitor your energy level.**
 - It's easy to sweat away important fluids and minerals, even in chilly weather.
 - Working in heavy clothing can tire you out quickly.
- **Tools and equipment can behave differently in the cold too.**
 - Metal often gets brittle, so it can break more easily.
 - Controls can be harder to operate and adjust.
- **Remember, skin "sticks" to metal when it's cold.**
 - Keep your gloves on whenever possible.
- **Of course, winter weather also provides plenty of opportunities for us to have some fun!**
 - Playing in the snow is something people of any age can enjoy.
 - 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.
 - Keep out of the street.
 - 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.
 - Never aim for the head.
 - Make sure your snowballs don't contain any ice or stones.
- **When you get back inside, 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 actually catch fire.
- **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, but use them with care.**
 - Before using an electric unit or one that burns kerosene or propane, you should read the owner's manual.
 - Be sure to follow the manufacturer's safety recommendations.
- **Position space heaters at least three feet away from combustible materials such as curtains or bedding.**
 - Be sure to use the correct fuel.
 - Putting gasoline in a kerosene heater can result in a fire, even an explosion.
- **To prevent the buildup of hazardous carbon monoxide gas, you should only use kerosene and propane heaters in areas with adequate ventilation.**
- **In addition to having to cope with the cold weather, wintertime can also mean decorating for the holidays.**

- **If you put up a tree and are using a natural one this year, be sure it's healthy.**
 - Bend the needles to verify that they aren't dried up and brittle.
 - If needles fall off when you bounce a tree on the ground, that'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.**
 - Add some preservative to the tree's daily supply of water.
 - This 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 strings before putting them on the tree.
 - Replace any defective bulbs and fuses.
- **Look for frayed wiring, cracked plugs or loose sockets.**
 - If you find anything wrong, throw the string away.
 - Don't bother to repair it.
 - 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 that you connect to an outlet.
 - Too many lights and appliances plugged into the same place can overload the circuit and start a fire.
- **Any lights and other electric decorations that you use outside should be UL approved for outdoor use.**
 - Make sure that all the decorations are 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 guess that you're not at home.

- **Candles are also a part of many winter holiday celebrations.**
 - They too must be kept away from materials that can catch fire.
 - Don't place burning candles near trees or decorations.
 - Never leave a lit candle unattended.
- **Be sure to keep the 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 what smoke detectors are for.
 - You should have at least one detector on each level of your home.
 - Test them weekly and change the batteries twice a year.
- **You should also keep a multi-purpose fire extinguisher in an easily accessible place.**
 - Be sure your entire family knows where it is and how to use it.
- **Make sure you have an escape plan and have everyone practice it.**
 - That way in case of a fire, everyone will know 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.
 - 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.**
 - Whenever alcohol is available, it's important to drink responsibly.
- **Before going to a party, designate one person to drive your group home afterwards.**
 - Being the "designated driver" doesn't mean they should drink less than their friends.
 - It means they should not drink any alcohol at all.

- **If you're hosting a party and serving alcohol, there are several things you should remember.**
 - Non-alcoholic beverages should always be available for the designated drivers and others who prefer not to drink.
 - There should always be something available for people to eat as well (food in the stomach helps to slow the rate at which the body absorbs alcohol).
- **Use a non-carbonated base, like fruit juice, when mixing an alcoholic punch.**
 - This also helps to prevent the bloodstream from absorbing alcohol too fast.
- **Encourage everyone to have some non-alcoholic beverages before they head home.**
- **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.
 - Don't let them get behind the wheel.
 - Arrange a ride for them with other departing guests, or schedule a pickup by a service like Uber or Lyft.
- **If none of these options are available, have them stay overnight.**
 - A good host, and friend, should never let a guest drive drunk.
- **If you are on the road during the holidays and suspect another driver of being under the influence...**
 - Stay out of their way.
 - Pull over or take an alternate route to get home.
- **Use your cell phone to report anyone you see driving erratically to the police.**
 - You just might end up saving someone else "down the road".

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- **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 overdo it.**
- **Winterize your car. And 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 about staying safe during the winter. If you stay on the lookout for hazards, and "think safety," you can put potential accidents in the "deep freeze".**