

# Safety Newsletter

December 2023  
ISSUE

"Self-insured Workers' Compensation Fund Members"

## Winter Safety

### Stay Safe and Healthy in Winter

Winter storms and cold temperatures can be dangerous. Stay safe and healthy by planning ahead. Prepare your home and vehicles. Prepare for power outages and outdoor activity. Check on older adults.

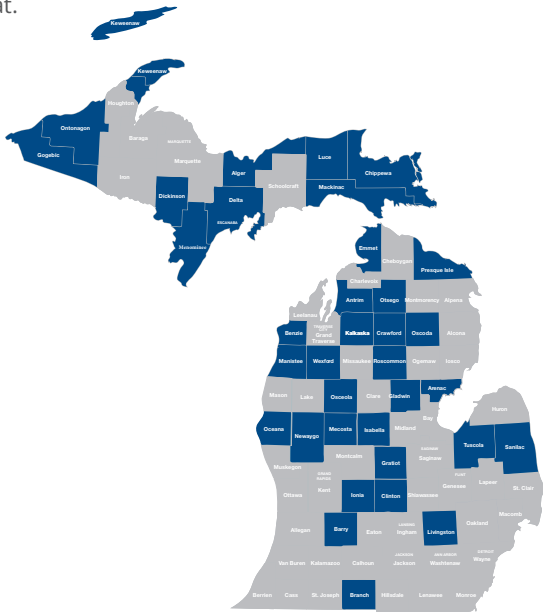
Although winter comes as no surprise, many of us may not be ready for its arrival. If you are prepared for the hazards of winter, you are more likely to stay safe and healthy when temperatures start to fall.

### Dress warmly and stay dry

Adults and children should wear

- A hat
- A scarf or knit mask to cover face and mouth
- Sleeves that are snug at the wrist
- Mittens (they are warmer than gloves)
- Water-resistant coat and boots
- Several layers of loose-fitting clothing

**Outer Layer:** The outermost layer helps protect you from wind, rain, and snow. It should be tightly woven, and preferably water and wind resistant, to reduce loss of body heat.



### Prepare Your Home

- Winterize your home.
  - Install weather stripping, insulation, and storm windows.
  - Insulate water lines that run along exterior walls.
  - Clean out gutters and repair roof leaks.
- Check your heating systems.
  - Have your heating system serviced professionally to make sure that it is clean, working properly, and ventilated to the outside.
  - Inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys.
  - Have a safe alternate heating source and alternate fuels available.
- If you do not have a working smoke detector, install one. Test batteries monthly and replace them twice a year.
- Prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning emergencies.
  - Install a CO detector to alert you of the presence of the deadly, odorless, colorless gas. Check or change the battery when you change your clocks in the fall and spring.
  - Learn the symptoms of CO poisoning: headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.

### Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if inhaled. When power outages occur during natural disasters and other emergencies, the use of alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating or cooking can cause CO to build up in a home, garage, or camper and to poison the people and animals inside.

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## Prepare Your Vehicle

Get your vehicle ready for cold weather use before winter arrives.

- Service the radiator and maintain antifreeze level.
- Check your tires' tread or, if necessary, replace tires with all-weather or snow tires.
- Keep the gas tank full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.
- Use a wintertime formula in your windshield washer.
- Prepare a winter emergency kit to keep in your car in case you become stranded. The kit should include:
  - Cell phone, portable charger, and extra batteries;
  - Items to stay warm, such as extra hats, coats, mittens, blankets, or sleeping bags;
  - Food and water;
  - Booster cables, flares, tire pump, and a bag of sand or cat litter (for traction);
  - Compass and maps;
  - Flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries;
  - First-aid kit; and
  - Plastic bags (for sanitation).

## Safety while driving on the Roads and Highways.

Listen to weather forecasts, road conditions, construction and closing and check your emergency supplies, including your emergency food and water supply.

## Get your vehicle ready and yourself.

Have maintenance service on your vehicle as often as the manufacturer recommends. Watch out for the other's while on the road that they see you. Picture below is my truck, was hit from behind, driver not watching road in front him.



## Prepare for Emergencies

Be prepared for weather-related emergencies, including power outages.

- Stock food that needs no cooking or refrigeration and water stored in clean containers.
- Ensure that your cell phone is fully charged.
- When planning travel, be aware of current and forecast weather conditions.
- Keep an up-to-date emergency, including:
  - attery-operated devices, such as a flashlight, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio, and lamps;
  - Extra batteries;
  - First-aid kit and extra medicine;
  - Baby items; and
  - Cat litter or sand for icy walkways.
- Protect your family from carbon monoxide (CO).
  - Keep grills, camp stoves, and generators out of the house, basement and garage.
  - Locate generators at least 20 feet from the house.
  - Leave your home immediately if the CO detector sounds, and call 911.

## Take Precautions Outdoors

Outdoor activities can expose you to several safety hazards, but you can take these steps to prepare for them:

- Wear appropriate outdoor clothing: wear a tightly woven, preferably wind-resistant coat or jacket; inner layers of light, warm clothing; mittens; hats; scarves; and waterproof boots.
- Sprinkle cat litter or sand on icy patches.
- Learn safety precautions to follow when outdoors.
  - Work slowly when doing outside chores.
  - Take a buddy and an emergency kit when you are participating in outdoor recreation.
  - Carry a cell phone.

## Have your chimney or flue inspected each year.

If you plan to use a fireplace or wood stove for emergency heating, have your chimney or flue inspected each year. Ask your local fire department to recommend an inspector or find one on-line.

## Do This When You Plan to Travel

When planning travel, be aware of current and forecast weather conditions.

- Avoid traveling when the National Weather Service has issued advisories.
- If you must travel, inform a friend or relative of your proposed route and expected time of arrival.
- Follow these safety rules if you become stranded in your vehicle.
  - Make your vehicle visible to rescuers. Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna, raise the hood (if it is not snowing), and turn on the inside overhead lights (when your engine is running).
  - Move anything you need from the trunk into the passenger area. Stay with your vehicle unless safety is no more than 100 yards away.
  - Keep your body warm. Wrap your entire body, including your head, in extra clothing, blankets, or newspapers. Huddle with other people if you can.
  - Stay awake and stay moving. You will be less vulnerable to cold-related health problems. As you sit, keep moving your arms and legs to improve circulation and stay warmer.
  - Run the motor (and heater) for about 10 minutes per hour, opening one window slightly to let in air. Make sure that snow is not blocking the exhaust pipe—this will reduce the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Be ready to check on family and neighbors who are especially at risk from cold weather hazards: young children, older adults, and the chronically ill.

If you have pets, bring them inside. If you cannot bring them inside, provide adequate, warm shelter and unfrozen water to drink.

No one can stop the onset of winter. However, if you follow these suggestions, you will be ready for it when it comes.

## For older adults, keep an easy-to-read

thermometer inside your home. Our ability to feel a change in temperature decreases with age. Older adults are more susceptible to health problems caused by cold. Check the temperature of your home often during the winter months.



# AVOID\*SPOT\*TREAT

## FROSTBITE & HYPOTHERMIA

In cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced, which can lead to serious health problems.

### \*\*\*\*\* AVOID \*\*\*\*\*

When the weather is extremely cold, try to stay indoors. If you must go outside, **dress properly** and know who is at **high risk** for **hypothermia** or **frostbite**.

When going outside be sure to wear:



When going outside in winter make sure body parts most often affected by frostbite are covered in warm, dry clothing.



Know who is at high risk:



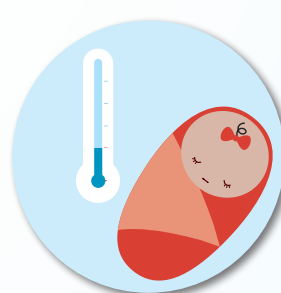
Older adults without proper food, clothing, or heating



People who stay outdoors for long periods (homeless, hikers, hunters, etc.)



People who drink alcohol in excess or use illicit drugs



Babies sleeping in cold rooms

### \*\*\*\*\* SPOT \*\*\*\*\*

#### FROSTBITE

A victim is often unaware of frostbite because frozen tissue is numb.



##### Signs & Symptoms

- Redness or pain in any skin area may be the first sign of frostbite.

##### Other signs include:

- a white or grayish-yellow skin area
- skin that feels unusually firm or waxy
- numbness

#### HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia often occurs at very cold temperatures, but can occur at cool temperatures (above 40°F), if a person is wet (from rain, sweat or cold water) and becomes chilled.



##### Signs & Symptoms

##### Adults:

- shivering
- exhaustion
- confusion
- fumbling hands
- memory loss
- slurred speech
- drowsiness

##### Infants:

- bright red, cold skin
- very low energy

If a person's temperature is below 95° get medical attention immediately.

### \*\*\*\*\* TREAT \*\*\*\*\*

If a person is experiencing hypothermia or frostbite...



#### FROSTBITE CAUTION

Since skin may be numb, victims of frostbite can harm themselves further. Use caution when treating frostbite and:



1  
UNLESS NECESSARY, DO NOT WALK ON FEET OR TOES WITH FROSTBITE



2  
DO NOT USE A FIREPLACE, HEAT LAMP, RADIATOR, OR STOVE FOR WARMING



3  
DO NOT USE A HEATING PAD OR ELECTRIC BLANKET FOR WARMING



4  
DO NOT RUB OR MASSAGE AREAS WITH FROSTBITE