ComfortZone

Health and Safety / Work and Home

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Make this new year your year of action

Whether you celebrated it, or lamented it, 2022 is here. And with it comes as much uncertainty about the pandemic as there was at the beginning of 2021. But that doesn't mean 2022 can't be a year without something to look forward to.

Make 2022 your year of action. Take the month of January to plan out a few actions you can accomplish throughout the year. Your list of actions can be as short or as long as you like. Start with three actions and take the time you need to achieve them. Choose actions that you will look forward to starting, or look forward to achieving, or both!

Here are a few tips to stay on course with your actions:

Small steps lead to success.

If one of your actions is to run a marathon, start out by going for a jog two or three times a week. Slowly, work up to longer runs and exercising more days per week. Or, if one of your actions is to eat healthier, start by replacing some of your favourite less healthy foods with more nutritious foods. Then, tackle another element of your diet, such as adding in a greater variety of vegetables, reducing portion size, and/or cutting back on fried food.

Change is a process.

Those unhealthy or undesired habits that you are trying to change probably took years to develop, so how can you expect to change them in just a matter of days, weeks or months? Be patient with yourself. Understand that working on your actions is a process. Even if you make a misstep or two, you can restart and continue with your action when you are ready.

Keep your actions in sight.

If you lose that initial spark of motivation, keep that inspiration alive by continuing to work on your actions, even after facing setbacks. If your current approach is not working, re-evaluate your strategies, and develop a new plan of attack. Remember that nothing is ever written in stone.

Don't give up on yourself.

Encountering a setback is one of the most common reasons why people decide to give new actions a pass. If you suddenly relapse into a bad habit, don't view it as a failure. The path may not always a straight one, and there will often be challenges along the way.

Inside this edition

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Health

Is the air inside your car safe?

(NC) Whether it's fighting traffic to get to work every morning or roaring off to pick up a child from school, most of us spend a lot of time in our cars. What you might not know is that this may be exposing you to chemicals and pollutants.

Traffic-related air pollution is known to negatively affect the heart, lungs and our overall health. Your exposure to these chemicals and pollutants depends on many factors, including surrounding traffic, whether windows and fan settings are open. Pollution is often highest during rush hour commutes.

In addition to traffic pollution, you are exposed to other pollutants that can be concentrated inside your vehicle. Here are some tips to reduce your exposure to air pollution while driving:

Replace your cabin air filter.

Replacing your cabin air filter will help reduce air pollution from outside entering your car. Electrostatic cabin air filters can lower your exposure to traffic pollution, especially particulate matter.

Don't store certain products in your trunk.

Move solvents, oil, gasoline, fuels and other products that may release harmful fumes or catch fire to a shed or an unattached garage. Be sure to keep them out of sight and out of reach of children and pets.

Reduce the emissions from your car.

Vehicle exhaust contains carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, fine particulate matter and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Keeping your vehicle well maintained helps reduce your contribution to air pollution. If you can, consider driving a low- or zero-emissions vehicle. Depending on where you live, vehicle emissions testing may be required by law. Regardless, it is good practice to ensure you are not contributing unnecessarily to the air pollution around you.

Finally, don't forget that reducing emissions also means choosing alternative and active forms of transportations whenever possible. Try biking, walking, public transportation, carpooling and even grouping your errands to drive less.

Keep a smoke-free vehicle

Never smoke, vape or use e-cigarettes for tobacco or cannabis inside your car. Many provinces have regulations banning smoking in vehicles with children. Know the regulations in your region and stay smoke free.

Health

Should you be worried about wood smoke?

(NC) There's nothing like a warm fire on a cold day to nurture your soul. But despite its cozy scent, wood smoke contains pollutants that can be harmful, including chemicals and fine particles. Fine particles can penetrate deep into your lungs and bloodstream, sometimes leading to serious health effects or even death.

If you use a wood stove or fireplace in your home, here are some steps you can take to reduce your health risks:

Maintain your stove

- Make sure that your wood stove is well-maintained, vented correctly and working properly.
- Have it inspected by a qualified professional at least once a year.

Clean your chimney

- Clean your chimney and flues regularly, following the manufacturer's instructions.

Use your dampers

- Allow more airflow (ventilation) when starting a fire and close the dampers when the wood is well charred. This technique produces more heat, so you use less wood.

Burn wisely

- Avoid burning wood on days when outdoor air pollution levels are high.
- Only burn dry, seasoned wood. Cut, split and stack wood in a dry area for at least six months before burning it.
- Never burn wood that has been painted or chemically treated; household garbage or cardboard; ocean driftwood, plywood, particle board or any wood with glue on or in it; or wet, rotted, diseased or mouldy wood.

If you are looking to upgrade or install a woodstove or fireplace:

- Choose a low-emission stove
- Install an "advanced combustion" wood stove or fireplace insert to reduce toxic emissions.

Find more information on keeping a healthy home at canada.ca/healthy-home.

Health

Know the facts to keep warm this winter

Does wearing a hat prevent heat loss? Does drinking alcohol keep you warm? Winter cold can be dangerous if you are not ready, or if you have prepared by following false information.

Here are a few myths and tips about dressing for winter, reviewed by the University of Rochester Medical Centre:

Myth: Dressing warmly avoids colds, viruses, and flu.

If you haven't been exposed to a virus, cold weather won't make any difference. There are more than 200 viruses that can cause the common cold.

Myth: You lose body heat through your head.

There's nothing special about your head. You'll lose body heat from any part of your body that is exposed. It's a good idea to wear a hat, but other parts of your body must also be covered to keep you from getting cold, experts say.

The amount of heat you can lose through your head depends on several factors, including how thick your hair is and how much energy you use in the cold. The ratio of the surface area of a child's head relative to the child's body surface area is much greater than that of an adult. Children lose proportionally more heat through their heads. Hoods and hats are more important to children because of this.

Myth: Men and women feel cold at the same temperature.

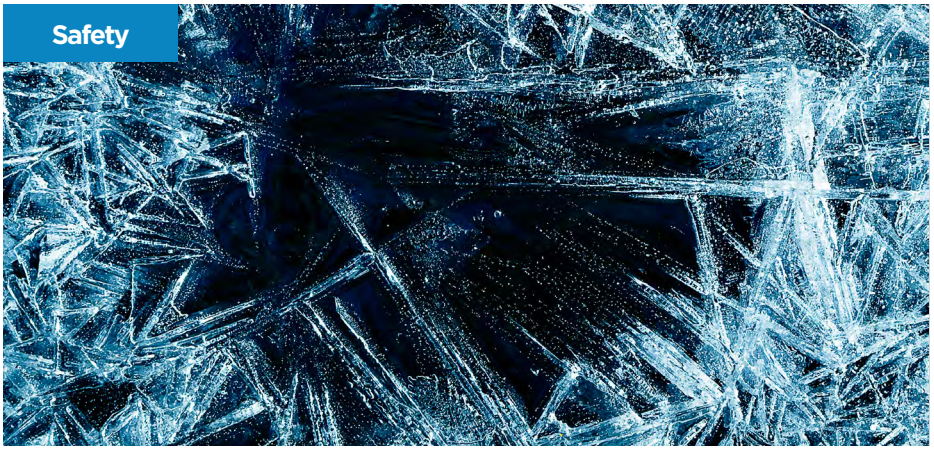
Ever notice that women's hands and feet tend to get colder before men's? It's because the external temperature at which men's and women's bodies begin conserving heat — called the set point temperature — varies by about 2°C.

When surrounding temperatures drop to a certain point, your body will conserve heat by shutting off the blood flow to the hands and feet, making them feel chilled. For women, that temperature is about 21°C, while men can hold steady until about 19°C or 20°C.

Myth: Drinking alcohol will keep you warm.

Drinking alcohol may make you feel warm because it causes blood to rush to your skin's surface. But it actually causes your blood vessels to widen and makes you lose heat faster. Drinking alcohol in the cold also decreases the shivering process, which produces extra body heat. But the worst part about alcohol consumption is that it impairs judgment.

Safety



Ice needs extra safety attention

Ice-related safety incidents can be very serious, even fatal. That's why it's important to be careful when taking part in winter activities that include venturing out on the ice.

Before fishing, skiing, snowmobiling, or engaging in any other activities on ice, check with local officials who monitor ice conditions. Do NOT go out on the ice if you see any of the following conditions:

- Cracks, holes, or breaks.
- Flowing water around the edges, just below the surface, or over the top of the ice.
- Ice that appears to have thawed and refrozen.

If you decide to go out on the ice, keep the following tips in mind:

Use designated ice surfaces.

Many communities have designated ponds or outdoor ice surfaces – for activities such as skating – that are maintained by knowledgeable personnel. Designated ice should be regularly tested to ensure that it is thick enough and strong enough for recreational use.

Measure ice thickness in several locations.

Before heading on to an ice surface for activities such as ice fishing, keep in mind that local conditions such as currents and water depths can affect ice thickness. For example, white ice has air or snow within it and should be considered suspect for recreational use.

Avoid travelling on ice at night or when it is snowing.

A frequent cause of ATV- and snowmobile-related drowning is poor visibility. Reduced visibility increases your chances of driving onto an open or weak ice area. Avoid it if you can.

Never go onto ice alone.

A companion may be able to rescue you or go for help if you get into difficulty. Before you leave shore, tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to return.

Stay off river ice and avoid the narrows between lakes.

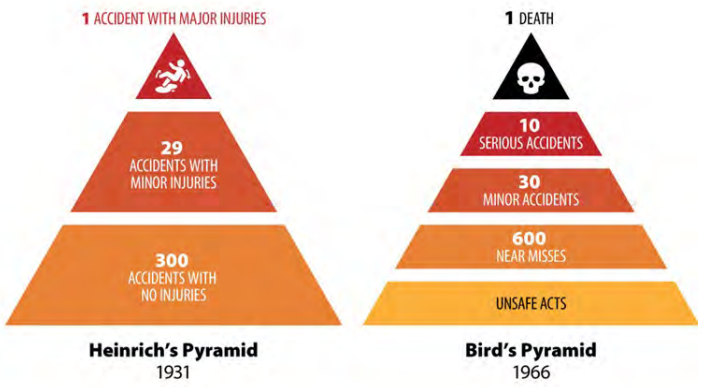
River currents and moving water at the narrows where one lake flows into another can quickly change ice thickness or cause ice to be much thinner than in other locations on the river or on the lake.

Wear a thermal protection buoyant suit or a lifejacket when snowmobiling.

If you don't have a thermal protection buoyant suit, wear a lifejacket or PFD over your snowmobile suit or layered winter clothing to increase your survival chances if you go through the ice.

Take safety equipment with you.

Pack ice picks, a rope and a small personal safety kit (i.e., a pocket knife, compass, whistle, fire starter kit and cellphone).



Safety depicted in pyramids and triangles

It goes by numerous names — The Accident Triangle, The Accident Pyramid, The Injury Incident Pyramid, The Safety Triangle and Heinrich's Pyramid.

The last one is the original, going back some 90 years to when Herbert Heinrich published a pioneering book on industrial safety based on his research in the insurance industry. He was one of the first to bring a statistical view to the problem of workplace safety. Heinrich concluded that by reducing the number of minor incidents, industrial companies would see a correlating fall in the number of major ones.

The relationship is often shown pictorially in the form of a triangle or pyramid. It helps narrow down the root cause and eliminate or control the hazard or cause.

Since Heinrich's initial premise was developed, there have been variations on this visual depiction of his accident reduction theory.

One of the more significant was developed by Frank Bird during the 1960s, based on the analysis of 1.7 million accident reports from almost 300 companies. He produced a triangle that showed a relationship of one serious injury accident to 10 minor injury (first aid only) incidents, to 30 damage-causing incidents, to 600 near misses.

Bird and others subsequently expanded on the theory to show a relationship between the number of reported near misses and the number of major accidents to reinforce the idea that the majority of accidents could be predicted and prevented by an appropriate intervention.

This cornerstone of what is known as behaviour-based safety hasn't been without criticism. The accuracy of figures used in the relationship has been disputed. For example, a 2010 report relating to the oil and gas industry showed that the original values held true only when applied to a large dataset and a broad range of activities. A 1991 study showed that in confined spaces the relationship was significantly different — 1.2 minor injuries for each serious injury or death.

There also has been criticism of the triangle/pyramid for focusing attention on the reduction of minor incidents, including near-misses. It has been claimed this has led workplace supervisors to ignore more serious but less likely risks.

One approach that has the backing of many safety leaders is to focus specifically on preventing incidents that have the potential to become serious injuries and fatalities (SIFs). The idea is to think less about actual outcomes and more about the potential outcomes, because not every near-miss or incident is one that could have led to a SIF.

According to this approach, the Heinrich pyramid can still be a useful tool, and efforts to track and reduce total incident rates remain valuable, but only some of the near-miss incidents that form the base of the pyramid actually have the potential to lead to serious injuries or worse.

Bottom line, though, is that while working unsafely doesn't necessarily result in an incident, the more times unsafe actions are allowed to occur, the more likely there will be serious, perhaps tragic, consequences.

Safety

Cost-saving tips for winter home maintenance

(NC) Although a beautiful season, winter can be harsh — especially in Canada. With plenty of snow, wind and sub-zero temperatures, it can take a toll on your home and result in unexpected expenses. Here are some tips for avoiding unwelcome winter maintenance costs.

Check your electrical system

Taking time to examine your electrical system is vital due to the cold weather conditions that can lead to costly damage if your home's wiring isn't up to par.

Schedule an electrical maintenance check to identify potential hazards before the snow falls. You can also get an energy efficiency audit. Not only will this keep you and your family safe, but it can also help cut down on your monthly heating costs.

Seal leaky doors and windows

Sealing your home's leaky doors and windows is another essential step for protecting your property and lowering your energy bills.

Use weather-stripping or caulking around the perimeter of entry points to prevent drafts from entering your house. This helps to minimize heating costs due to poor insulation.

Prepare for winter storms

Winter storms can cause power outages and downed trees and limbs that may result in damage to your roof or windows. Clear loose branches, debris and dead trees from around the exterior of your house before winter arrives so that you can avoid any damage.

Check with manufacturer for repairs

The last thing you want to worry about during the cold weather is having vital appliances break when they're needed most. But if this does happen, make sure to check the manufacturer's website for repair options, as this can save you valuable time, effort and money.

Health

Tips for your first trip since the beginning of the pandemic

(NC) If you're fully vaccinated, you probably feel that you have held back long enough and can't wait to start travelling again. After all, you're in great need of new memories and new photos of the family having fun together outside the home.

Before you book your trip, you will want to check entry requirements for your destination and find out if you are okay to go. You will also want to register as a Canadian abroad to receive emergency notifications related to that country. All this can be by done using a government app called Travel Smart. There's a lot of useful information on this app that you'll want to have handy, including emergency contact information.

Do get travel health insurance, even if you're young and healthy, to avoid getting a big hospital bill if you get sick or hurt abroad. You are also responsible for any costs related to changes to your travel plans. Travel restrictions are unpredictable during the COVID-19 pandemic and travel still exposes you to greater risks.

If you are going to travel, here are a few quick tips to help you in your preparations:

- 1. Be sure that the entry requirements at your destination will not be an issue.
- 2. Carry your proof of vaccination with your passport during travel.
- 3. Stop your mail and all deliveries so that it doesn't look like no one's at home.
- 4. Be sure to have the documentation you need if you're travelling with children.
- 5. Make sure your travel insurance covers itinerary modifications in case things change suddenly at your destination.

Since it's always good to plan for any eventuality, keep in mind that your return to Canada might involve taking a COVID-19 tests, which can add to the cost of your vacation.

Also, it's important to remember that changes in travel restrictions are unpredictable during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially now with the surge of the Omicron variant, and travel still exposes you to greater risks. Get all the information you need, register your trip, and find out what is needed to return to Canada at travel.gc.ca.

Safety

Misusing extension cords can be dangerous

No one in any workplace should take electricity for granted. Regardless of how small the task, how temporary the project or how trained the staff, everyone should be using safe work practices when using electrical tools and equipment — and that includes extension cords.

Whether indoors or outdoors, extension cords are a temporary means of delivering power to where it is needed. Heavy reliance on extension cords shows you have too few outlets to address your needs.

It's important to select a cord that's appropriate for the intended use. Outdoor cords have insulation that protects against moisture, sunlight and abrasion, so using an indoor cord outdoors can create a fire hazard or result in electric shock.

A similar danger can exist when cords are overloaded, which is why it's not a good idea to connect multiple extension cords but rather to use one that is long enough.

Power bars and extension cords that are pinched, pierced, bent or otherwise damaged do not look very threatening, but the truth is, they can be serious hazards.

The following tips will help ensure safe use of extension cords:

- Do not allow cords to run through water or snow on the ground. Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) in damp environments.
- Do not run through walls, doorways, ceilings or floors. If a cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which could result in a fire hazard.
- Keep cords visible and avoid placing them in high-traffic areas as they can easily become a tripping hazard, causing injury to your family or guests.
- Do not drive over extension cords unless they have appropriate protective covers.
- Do not use a cord to provide power for more than one device.
- Make sure the extension cord or temporary power strip you use is rated for the products to be plugged in and is marked for either indoor or outdoor use.
- The appliance or tool with which you are using the cord will have a wattage rating on it. Match this with your extension cord, and do not use a cord that has a lower rating.
- Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way. Touching even a single exposed strand can give an electric shock or burn.
- Never use three-prong plugs with outlets that only have two slots for the plug. Do not cut off the ground pin to force a fit. This defeats the purpose of a three-prong plug and could lead to an electrical shock.
- Never force a plug into an outlet if it doesn't fit.
- Use extension cords with polarized and/or three-prong plugs.
- Only buy cords approved by an independent testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or Canadian Standards Association (CSA).
- Unplug extension cords when not in use and store them indoors.

Wellness

4 tips for mindful eating

(NC) With busy schedules, we're all guilty of eating lunch on the go or sitting down for dinner in front of a favourite show. Mindful eating can help, promoting a healthy lifestyle that lets us reconnect with what our bodies truly need.

Mindful eating is the practice of paying attention to food. It involves slowing down to truly experience a meal and then paying attention to how the body feels — the tricky part is doing all that with observation instead of judgement.

Here, Abbey Sharp, a registered dietitian, shares her tips on eating more mindfully:

Put aside distractions

Research shows that eating while distracted can lead to eating more while feeling less satisfied. Focusing on what's on your plate can make a big difference. Give it a try — turn off the TV, put away your phone and pay attention to your next meal. It's not easy to stay focused, but the more you practice the easier it gets.

Slow down

Our bodies need about 20 minutes to signal to the brain that it has received enough food. Give your body a chance to feel full by slowing down your pace. If you're used to shovelling back your food in haste, try putting your cutlery down in between bites, taking a sip of water, engage in conversation and chewing your food thoroughly.

Track how food makes you feel

People respond differently to different foods. Some might feel great after a big bowl of cereal, others not so much. While we can make foods morally equal, they're not all nutritionally equal and this can have an impact on how they make our bodies feel.

Then, after a meal, take time to check in with yourself. How does the food on your plate or in your cup make you feel?

Understand the source of hunger

Check-in with yourself to determine why you're reaching for food — is it physical hunger, emotional hunger or "mouth hunger" (a specific craving)?

There's nothing wrong with sometimes eating for reasons other than physical hunger, so it's important to ask these questions without judgement. But getting to know our patterns can help us make choices that feel best for our bodies while finding more effective coping mechanisms.

Health

Drinking water may still contain contaminants

(NC) As clean water travels through pipes towards your tap, it can pick up contaminants. One of these could be lead. It's important to reduce exposure to lead as much as possible, because even low concentrations can negatively impact your health.

If you suspect lead is present in your drinking water, keep yourself and your family safe by following these steps:

Flush out your pipes

Run the tap until it's cold before drinking or cooking with it, particularly if the water has been sitting in your pipes for several hours. Use only cold tap water for drinking or cooking, since heat increases the leaching of lead and other metals from your plumbing into the water.

Inspect and clean your taps

Every month, inspect and clean the aerators or screens at the tap. If you find debris, clean it out. This will remove any particles that may contain lead.

Replace brass fittings

Brass faucets and valves can contain some lead. Replace them with fittings certified to low lead content standards.

Consider a household water filter at the tap

If you know there is lead in your tap water, you can use a filter. The filter must be installed and maintained properly, or it could become ineffective. Make sure that any device you purchase is certified to the NSF International standard for removal of lead. Test your water for lead before installation and during use of the filter to confirm it is working properly.

This option is recommended as a temporary or interim step until a solution that addresses the source of lead can be completed (such as replacing a lead service line).

Find more information on keeping a healthy home at canada.ca/healthy-home

Health

Harmful germs may be growing in your home plumbing

(NC) There is a group of nasty bacteria that will happily make themselves at home in your hot tub, humidifier, water heater, showerhead and other places in your plumbing system. Known as Legionella, these bacteria can make you sick if inhaled from water droplets and mists released into the air.

Legionella tend to grow where there are warm water temperatures, standing or still water and settled particles and biofilms — a slimy, glue-like material containing other germs and nutrients. Fortunately, most healthy people don't get sick from these bacteria.

But some people may have a higher risk of infection, including people over 40 years of age, current and former smokers, people with chronic lung disease or with other underlying illnesses, and those with already weakened immune systems.

Legionella can cause two types of illness, Legionnaires' disease and Pontiac fever. Legionnaires' disease is a serious respiratory illness that results in pneumonia, lasting weeks to months, and can lead to death.

Pontiac fever is a milder illness, causing flu-like symptoms. People with Pontiac fever generally recover in two to five days without treatment.

Protect yourself and others in your home from Legionella by:

- Keeping your water heater temperature at a minimum of 60°C. To reduce the risk of scalding, the temperature of the water at the tap should be no higher than 49°C. You can contact a qualified plumber to install mixing valves to control the tap water temperature.
- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting mist-producing devices in your home, such as showerheads and sink taps, humidifiers and hot tubs, according to manufacturer directions.
- Running the hot and cold water taps for a few minutes after not using them for more than two weeks.
- Periodically draining and flushing your water heater, according to manufacturer directions, to reduce settled particles.

Find more information by searching "Legionella" at canada.ca.

Wellness

How to keep up with the kids online — and learn from them

(NC) Sometimes it seems like the world is moving at a faster and faster pace. Between news cycles and constantly changing digital trends, it can be hard to keep track of it all, including your kids' behaviour online. Here are some tips on how you can expedite that process for yourself:

Ask where they're hanging

While all the social media attention over the last decade has been on Facebook and Instagram, over the last couple of years kids have shifted to TikTok and SnapChat. Talk to your kids about what makes these particular apps special to them, and maybe consider joining them yourself.

Open up conversations

A lot of kids and teens treat popular social media content creators and influencers — and their communities of fans — as extensions of their personal friendships. Ask your children what kind of social media influencers they enjoy following and why to gain insights into what piques their interest.

For example, if they're following lots of makeup gurus, sports creators or comedians, this can give you a better idea of what topics are of interest to them.

Influencers that focus on mental health, family issues or social justice can also help you to have some harder personal conversations with your kids and learn what they value.

Ask your kids to share favourites

Don't be afraid to ask your kids what they are watching and inquire about where they're getting their information and entertainment. Do they have a funny viral video of the week that they can't stop laughing about? As "uncool" as it may sound, ask them to show you what's funny, and open up the conversation to things going on in their lives. Who knows, you may end up learning a lot more about your kid this way.

Learn to speak their language

Is it time to brush up on your digital skills? If you're finding it hard to connect, try boosting your skills through free programs like ABC Life Literacy Canada's Youth Teaching Adults. The program helps bridge the technology gap to let adults thrive in the digital world. From computer basics to tablet apps to social media, there are many unique resources to choose from that can help you to speak digital media more fluently. Learn more at youthteachingadults.ca.

Health

Refrigerated food and power outages

Power outages happen for a variety of reasons and can be especially difficult during the winter months. While keeping ourselves warm becomes a top priority, another primary concern is our food supply, especially refrigerated and frozen foods.

While the simple solution might be to keep everything outside in the freezing temperatures, don't do it because the sun's rays could warm or thaw chilled or frozen food even when the outdoor temperature is very cold, and animals could contaminate your food.

If your power stays off for several days, you may wonder if your food is still okay. What should you throw out and when? Here are a few tips to keep in mind from public health authorities across Canada:

What to do during a power outage:

- Do not open the refrigerator or freezer door unless absolutely necessary. This will help maintain the cold temperature.
- Freezing stops the growth of bacteria. Without power and so long as the doors are kept closed, freezers that are completely full can keep foods frozen for up to two days.
- Half-full freezers can keep foods frozen for one day.
- An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours.

Handling refrigerated and frozen food after a power outage:

- First and foremost; when in doubt, throw it out.
- Surge damage may have occurred to electric appliances, so check that refrigerators and freezers are still working and can maintain proper cold temperatures. Review any electronic settings that may have been reset when the refrigerator or freezer was off.

- Normal refrigerator temperature is 4°C. When the refrigerator is warmer than normal, high risk foods that are more likely to become dangerous include meat, fish and shellfish, dairy, cooked foods and leftovers, and produce that has been cut. Discard high risk foods stored in refrigerators, coolers and freezers IF the temperature was greater than 4ºC for more than 2 hours. If you don't have a thermometer and can't measure the refrigerator temperature, discard any of the above listed high-risk foods that are no longer cool to the touch. Also discard any frozen food that has no ice crystals or is thawed and/or is no longer cool to the touch.
- Discard any food that has an obvious unusual colour or odour, even if the refrigerator or freezer always maintained cold temperatures.
- Frozen food that still contains ice crystals or feels cool to the touch can be re-frozen.
- If frozen raw food has leaked during thawing, clean and sanitize the areas where the food has leaked or touched. A sanitizer can be made by mixing 1 teaspoon of ordinary household bleach for every 4 cups of water.

Safety

What is black ice and how to spot it

We often hear about black ice during the winter months, and we know how dangerous it is. However, perhaps some of us are unsure of how it forms and how we can spot it before its too late.

Black ice is just like regular ice in that it forms on the surface of pavement after freezing rain or the re-freezing of snow or rain. It often occurs when the air temperature is warmer than the road temperature. Because of this difference, the liquid moisture in the air freezes as soon as it touches the road. Quick drops in temperature also cause black ice as water on the road has not had the chance to evaporate before the freeze explains carfax.ca.

The reason it's often referred to as black ice is that it forms without bubbles and is therefore completely transparent, making it difficult to see as it blends in with the surface. Therefore, trying to spot it before you drive through it is incredibly difficult. Instead, try to anticipate when and where it could happen. Bridges are common spots for ice to form since the temperatures from wind blowing underneath is generally cooler than the road itself. Early in the morning or at night is when more icy patches will occur since that's when the temperature drops below freezing. Keep a close eye on vehicles in front of you too – if you notice them swerving suddenly, they may have found an icy patch on the road.

If you do hit a patch of black ice when driving, it's important to follow these steps:

- Stay calm.
- React as little as possible and keep the vehicle headed straight.
- Steer straight, take your foot off the gas.
- Do not hit the brakes.
- Place your hands at nine and three o'clock. This can give you better control of the wheel compared to the previously recommended ten and two.

Proper PPE important when working outdoors in winter

Today's safety meeting is about the importance of the proper PPE to wear in cold temperatures.

Winter can be a difficult time when working outside. The cold and wet conditions can cause a variety of hazards. Simple tasks can become difficult if the proper personal protective equipment is not being worn, especially when temperatures take a huge dip.

This decrease in temperature can result in injury especially when exposed for a long period of time. It is important to stay protected when working in cold weather conditions.

The definition of extreme cold varies in different parts of Canada due to local climate. Whenever temperatures drop dramatically below normal, staying warm and safe can become challenging. In general, your risk of health effects like windburn and frostbite increases at wind chill values below -27.

The wind can make cold temperatures feel even colder. The wind chill index measures what the temperature feels like on exposed skin based on the speed of the wind. A wind chill can cause your body to lose heat faster and your skin to freeze very quickly, according to canada.ca. Wind chills below -70 have been recorded in some northern Canadian communities.

While working outdoors, winter clothing is your single most important resource to keep warm. It's essential to dress in loose-fitting layers, which trap heat easily and allow you to adjust clothing as your activities change throughout the day. If

overdressed, you'll work up a sweat as the day progresses.

When you're less active, sweat starts to cool your body down, so it's important to wear enough layers to keep warm, but not so hot as to sweat excessively. If you are sweating profusely you may be overexerting yourself; work activities and hydration should be adjusted accordingly. Be sure to add layers of clothing as your activity level decreases. Layers should be made of fabrics that retain warmth when wet such as wool, polyester fleece, and polypropylene (often found in synthetic long-johns).

It's important to look for footwear that delivers best-in-class slip resistance with exceptional grip and durability to keep you stable on slippery surfaces. The outsole should be engineered to withstand extreme temperatures. In the case of items like gloves, wearing something bulky may even limit your ability to do the job. That's why it's important to find PPE made with the right materials. A job that requires flexibility in cold environments will call for thinner insulating material that keep you warm but don't limit movement.

Cotton is quite possibly the worst fabric to wear for warmth in winter. Once it gets wet from rain, snow or sweat, the cotton will start to extract heat out of the body. The effects are especially noticeable in cotton socks, underwear, or if a cotton T-shirt is the first layer next to skin. Goose down is an excellent insulator when dry, but because it loses almost all its insulating power when wet, it is best to avoid during winter months.

Working outdoors requires your body to produce heat to keep you warm. Due to the extreme conditions, it's best to take in your calories steadily over the day. Six to eight snacks are far better than two heavy meals. Fifty per cent of your nutritional intake should be from carbohydrates such as bread and bagels. Cheese, butter, and meats add a valuable fat content to help keep your body warm.

Hydration is very important for winter work. On average, you should drink about four litres of water or fluids a day. If you only have a one-litre water bottle with you during the day, make sure to consume lots of hot drinks at breakfast and dinner. Drinks with caffeine (coffee or soda), or alcohol should be avoided.

Thanks for your attention today.

Comfort Zone

Safety Meeting Quiz

Proper PPE important when working outdoors in winter

1. Dressing in layers:
   - ☐ A. Allows you to adjust clothing as your activities change throughout the day.
   - ☐ B. Keeps you on trend with the latest fashion.
   - ☐ C. Does nothing at all.

2. Cotton is quite possibly the worst fabric to wear for warmth in winter.
   - ☐ True ☐ False

3. Working outdoors requires your body to produce heat to keep you warm.
   - ☐ True ☐ False

4. Cheese, butter, and meats add a valuable fat content to help keep your body warm.
   - ☐ True ☐ False

5. Once cotton gets wet:
   - ☐ A. It feels damp but will not really be a problem.
   - ☐ B. It extracts heat from the body.
   - ☐ C. None of the above.

6. Hydration is very important for winter work.
   - ☐ True ☐ False

ANSWERS: 1. A 2.True 3.True 4.True 5. B 6.True

Comfort Zone

Attendance Sheet

Proper PPE important when working outdoors in winter

Date of Meeting: _____ Topic: _____

Location: _____ Department:_____

Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____ Meeting Leader: _____

Have meeting attendees sign this sheet:
