

WINTER SAFETY TIPS

Preventing Hypothermia and Frostbite

Dress for the Weather:

- Wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.
- Wear mittens over gloves. Layering works for your hands as well.
- Always wear a hat and cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.
- Dress children warmly and set reasonable time limits on outdoor play.
- Restrict infants' outdoor exposure when it is colder than 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Watch for signs of frostbite. These include loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, and the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, get medical help immediately.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia. These include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion.

If you or someone you know shows any of these symptoms, get in touch with a healthcare provider immediately. If symptoms are severe, call 9-1-1.



Heating Safety

- Use your home heating system and space heating appliances wisely and responsibly.
- Never try to heat your home using a charcoal or gas grill, the kitchen stove, or other product not specifically designed as a heater as these can cause a fire or produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide very quickly. Using faulty or improper heating sources is the number two cause of home fires in Massachusetts.
- Have your heating system cleaned and checked annually.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible gas produced whenever any fuel is burned, such as near oil or gas furnaces, water heaters, fireplaces, stoves, and some space heaters. It has no smell, taste, or color. It is a poison and is deadly.

Snow Shoveling Tips

- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack - a major cause of death in the winter.
- Avoid shoveling if you are elderly or have a heart condition.
- Stretch before going outside to shovel.
- Be smart! Take frequent breaks, even if only for a couple of minutes.
- Stop shoveling if you have shortness of breath, heavy sweating, or any kind of pain.
- Use a smaller shovel and make sure your shovel isn't bent, tilting, or damaged.



Snow Blower Safety Tips

- Always start your snow blower in a well-ventilated area to avoid possible carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If you haven't used your snow blower in a while, remember that gasoline may still be inside from the last time you used it. Gasoline is only good for about 30 days, unless you've added a fuel stabilizer.
- Always make sure that the snow blower is completely turned off before replacing any parts.
- Fix clogs carefully. If your snow blower becomes clogged, turn it off, and remove the key before trying to clear it. Use a stick and NOT your hands to clear debris.
- If your snow blower hasn't been checked up by a professional in a while, have it serviced before you use it.



Holiday Safety

- Use labeling information on toys as a guide in selecting toys for children.
- Follow the age recommendations and warning labels on toys. The recommendations consider a child's ability and skill level at each age.
- Decorate with lights labeled "UL approved." Turn off lights before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Inspect lights for exposed or frayed wires, loose connections, and broken sockets. Do not overload extension cords or outlets and do not run an electrical cord under a rug.
- Do not leave candles unattended.



Resources

City of Boston Home Heating Information
<http://www.cityofboston.gov/homeheating>

Mayor's No Heat Hotline
 617-635-4500

ABCD Heat and Fuel Assistance
 Applications are taken from November through April at ABCD's Central Office or at any of ABCD neighborhood sites. For more information, call 617-357-6012 or visit www.bostonabcd.org/programs/FuelAssistance.html.

City of Boston "Know Snow" Information
www.cityofboston.gov/snow

Building a Healthy Boston
 Mayor Thomas M. Menino



Winter Fun and Sports Safety

- **Helmet Safety** - Kids should always wear helmets when they ski, sled, snowboard, and play ice hockey. There are different helmets for different activities. Parents should wear helmets too. Remember, your children learn safety habits by watching you.
- **Skating Safety** - Skate only in areas that have been approved for skating. Teach children to skate in same direction as the crowd to avoid collision. Avoid darting across the ice and never skate alone.
- **Sledding Safety**- Teach children to only sled on terrain that is free of obstacles. Make sure the bottom of the slope is far from streets and traffic. Always use a sled with a steering mechanism. Avoid lying flat on the sled while riding downhill. Do not overload a sled with children.
- **Snow Skiing Safety** - Enroll in at least one ski lesson and never ski alone. Use caution around lifts, control speed, and be aware of other skiers. Wear eye and sun protection. Ski helmets are recommended.
- **Pedestrian Safety** - Keep slippery driveways and sidewalks well-shoveled. Apply material for traction such as rock salt to avoid slips and falls. Dress children in bright color clothes (not white) for snowy weather.