

# Winter Driving Tips

Reliable transportation is especially important in the winter. If you have a car, make sure it is ready for whatever winter may bring. The following precautions may help you to avoid an unpleasant or dangerous situation while traveling:

- You should keep your car in top operating condition all year round for safety and fuel economy. It is especially important to winterize your car by checking the following:

*ignition system*  
*battery*  
*lights*  
*tire tread*  
*cooling system*  
*fuel system*  
*exhaust system*  
*antifreeze*

*proper grade oil*  
*heater*  
*brakes*  
*wiper blades*  
*defroster*  
*snow tires*  
*chains*

- Keep your gasoline tank as nearly full as possible. This will minimize water in the tank and will provide the maximum advantage in case of trouble.
- A cell phone can be a very useful item in emergencies.
- Carry a winter storm car kit, especially if traveling long distances or, in the northern states, at *all* times. A winter storm car kit should contain sleeping bags, or two or more blankets.
- Two empty 3 lb. coffee cans with lids. One may be used for sanitary facilities, the other to burn candles for heat. Use a catalytic heater if available. A catalytic heater relies on a chemical reaction to produce heat. (Whether using this type of emergency heat source or your car's own heater, be sure to **leave a window open** for air circulation. Carbon monoxide poisoning can happen without the victim being aware of it until it's too late.)
  - Matches and candles.
  - Winter clothing, including wool caps, mittens and overshoes.
  - Large box of facial tissues.
  - First aid kit with pocket knife.
  - Flashlight with extra batteries.
  - Small sack of sand.
  - One set of tire chains.
  - Shovel.
  - Food supply (high calorie, non-perishable food such as canned nuts, dried fruit, candy, etc.)
  - Tools (pliers, screwdriver, adjustable wrench).
  - Windshield scraper.
  - Transistor radio, with extra battery.
  - Battery booster cables.

## ***If you must use your car during a storm:***

Plan your travel, selecting both primary and alternate routes.

Check latest weather information on your radio.

Try not to travel alone, two or three people are preferable.

Travel in convoy with another vehicle, if possible.

Always fill the gasoline tank before entering open country, even for a short distance.

Drive carefully and defensively.

If the storm begins to be too much for you to handle, seek refuge immediately.

Let someone know your itinerary so that, if you don't arrive on time, officials will know where to search for you.

**Avoid driving** if you can use public transportation. If you must use a car, drive at a speed that is safe for road conditions. •

## Detect and Treat Cold Related Illnesses

Prolonged exposure to low temperatures, wind or moisture, whether it be on a ski slope or in a stranded car, can result in cold-related illnesses such as frostbite and hypothermia. The National Safety Council offers these tips to help you spot and put a halt to these winter hazards.

**Frostbite** is the most common injury resulting from exposure to severe cold. Superficial frostbite is characterized by white, waxy, or grayish-yellow patches on the affected areas. The skin feels cold and numb. The skin surface feels stiff but underlying tissue feels soft and pliable when depressed. Treat superficial frostbite by taking the victim inside immediately. Remove any restrictive clothing items that could impair circulation. If you notice signs of frostbite, immediately seek medical attention.

Deep frostbite usually affects the feet or hands and is characterized by waxy, pale, solid skin. Blisters may appear. Treat deep frostbite by moving the victim indoors and immediately seek medical attention.

**Hypothermia** occurs when the body's temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Symptoms of this condition include change in mental status, uncontrollable shivering, cool abdomen and a low core body temperature. Severe hypothermia may produce rigid muscles, dark and puffy skin, irregular heart and respiratory rates, and unconsciousness.

Treat hypothermia by protecting the victim from further heat loss and calling for immediate medical attention. Add insulation such as blankets, pillows, towels or newspapers beneath and around the victim. Be sure to cover the victim's head. Replace wet clothing with dry clothing. Handle the victim gently because rough handling can cause cardiac arrest. Keep the victim in a horizontal (flat) position.

### How to prevent cold-related illnesses

Avoid frostbite and hypothermia when you are exposed to cold temperatures by wearing layered clothing, eating a well-balanced diet, and drinking warm, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free liquids to maintain fluid levels. Avoid becoming wet, as wet clothing loses 90 percent of insulating value. •

*National Safety Council*

Claims Corner Article:

## MEDICAL BILLS

Recently, we have received some phone calls from our member districts regarding direct billing by providers to either the injured employee or the Board of Education.

The medical providers (through their contracts with our managed care companies) should be sending the bills for services provided directly to the Managed Care companies and not to the injured employee or Board of Education. If you or your employees continue to receive repeated direct billings from providers, please let NJSBAIG know so we can follow up to rectify the problem. We will notify the Managed Care companies, either Qualcare Inc. or Consolidated Service Group, depending on

which company is used for your district.

Please feel free to contact Nancy Spector, extension 3008, or myself at extension 3015, to advise if this is occurring. •

*By Connie Rogers  
NJSBAIG Claim Supervisor*

## **Aim for a Great Housekeeping Seal of Approval!**

Some OSHA regulations have housekeeping requirements that must be met, and your school probably has its own rules to keep the facility orderly. Organized cleaning and storage has many benefits, but most importantly, orderly surroundings are necessary for safety.

### **Keep a lookout**

Don't wait for a formal school safety inspection to find examples of poor housekeeping. Take a little time each day to put things away and clean up in your work area. Housekeeping is something that everyone has to help with. As you're going through the day, you have lots of opportunities to practice good housekeeping. Catch yourself before you add to housekeeping problems.

### **Housekeeping checklist**

Use the following checklist to help you improve the housekeeping in your area:

- Is access to exits kept clean at all times?
- Is storage kept out of the aisles?
- Are cords kept from lying across an aisle?
- Is there enough clearance around fire doors so they close properly in case of an emergency?
- Is there clear access to all fire extinguishers?
- Are all the fire extinguishers hanging where they belong?
- Is there at least 24 inches of clearance under all ceilings?
- Is there any storage in stairwells? •

## ***WeTip* - Helping You Solve All Types of Campus Crime**

Why don't the people that know what happened on campus come forward? The fear of reprisal or loss of friendship is usually the reason.

The WeTip program gives these people the opportunity to come forward utilizing a 100% anonymous method. No fear of reprisal or loss of friendship.

When graffiti, vandalism or other criminal acts are encountered, the WeTip program is the perfect way to gather information about the perpetrators. Posters and notices specific to the event can be developed by WeTip asking for information about the crime.

By calling WeTip's Sue Mandell at 909-987-5005 extension 250, the poster artwork will be developed and emailed to you for your duplication. Specifics such as who, what, where and when should be supplied so the artwork can be specific to your situation.

Publicizing the WeTip program through school newsletters, daily announcements, posters, letters home, class discussions and assemblies will help to keep this vital crime-reporting tool fresher in the minds of your school community members. When specific information is needed the request through WeTip will not seem foreign.

Members of the NJSBAIG have access to this program free of charge. Your only cost is the time and effort to publicize. Since 1973 WeTip has proven successful in many communities and schools across the country,

For more information call Marty Kalbach, NJSBAIG Loss Control Manager at 609-386-6060 extension 3024. •

*By Marty Kalbach  
NJSBAIG Loss Control Manager*

## **Nothing Like a Cozy Wood Fire in the Fireplace-Right?**

Yes, but there are a few precautions to take. Make sure your chimney has been professionally serviced yearly to:

Check for creosote build-up and to clean the chimney thoroughly  
Missing mortar or bricks that will allow flames to escape into the home and causing a fire  
Install a chimney cap with a screen to arrest sparks going up the chimney

### **Tips for wood use:**

Keep the wood outside and covered until used

Remove loose bark housing insects

Never use woods with pitch, i.e., spruce, pine, etc.

Bring in only enough for the immediate use. Your warm house may awaken termites or bugs that will invade your home

Never use wood treated with CCA/CHROMATED COPPER ARSENIC. This wood is usually green in color. The fumes are extremely toxic!

Always make sure fire wood is burned completely before you retire or leave the house

Have a good, well fitting glass fireplace enclosure to keep the smoke and flames inside the fireplace

Don't have a roaring fire. The intense heat may cause the glass to break or shatter. There may be a chance for heat or flames to escape and start a fire.

Always keep a fire extinguisher near by. A CO<sup>2</sup> or ABC would be a good choice

Once you have observed these common-sense guidelines sit by the fireplace and enjoy the glow and warmth on a cold winter's day. •

*By Dave Engebretson  
NJSBAIG Loss Control Representative*