

JIF NEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Somerset County Joint Insurance Fund featuring Safety, Health & Wellness



USEPA MAKES JANUARY NATIONAL RADON ACTION MONTH

SOURCE: WWW.EPA.GOV/RADON

You can't see, smell or taste radon, but it could be present at a dangerous level in your home. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers in America and claims the lives of about 21,000 Americans each year. In fact, the EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General urge all Americans to protect their health by testing their homes, schools and other buildings for radon.

Exposure to radon is a preventable health risk and testing radon levels in your home can help prevent unnecessary exposure. If a high radon level is detected in your home, you can take steps to fix the problem to protect yourself and your family.

Three Things You Can Do During National Radon Action Month:

- 1) Test your home. EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General recommend that all homes in the U.S. be tested for radon. Testing is easy and inexpensive. Learn how to obtain an easy-to-use test kit.
- 2) Spend time during National Radon Action Month encouraging others to learn about radon and test their homes.

Tell your family and friends about the health risk of radon. View or order EPA's free radon publications.

- 3) Buy a radon-resistant home. If you are considering buying a new home, look for builders who use radon-resistant new construction. Read more about radon-resistant new construction, "Building Radon Out: A Step-by-Step Guide to Build Radon-Resistant Homes".

Build Green: It's Easy to Build New Homes Radon-Resistant. The techniques to prevent radon from entering a home are practical and straightforward for any builder. It's an inexpensive way to offer families a benefit that could reduce their risk of lung cancer.



BE PREPARED FOR WINTER DRIVING

SOURCE: WWW.NSC.ORG/LEARN/PAGES/SAFETY-EVENTS-WINTER-SAFETY.ASPX

Driving in the winter can be harrowing, especially where blizzard and icy conditions crop up seemingly out of nowhere. Midwesterners may be used to heavy snow, but residents of states as far south as Georgia and Texas are seeing ice and snow more often. Driving can be even more treacherous in these areas because drivers are not accustomed to it.

Drivers can take precautions to ensure they will arrive safely at their destination.

Check the Weather Before You Go

If the weather is frigid, you're going to want to warm up the car before you drive it. To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, never leave a vehicle running in an enclosed area, such as a garage. In fact, the Consumer Product Safety Commission warns that a car running in an attached garage is never safe, even with the garage door open.

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WINTER DRIVING CONT.

If the forecast looks iffy, wait out the storm if possible. But if you must travel make sure you share your travel plans and route with someone before you leave.

If you become stranded in an unfamiliar area, do not leave your car. Light flares in front and behind the car and make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow, mud or any object.

Prepare Your Car for Winter

Besides checking the weather, it's important to have a mechanic check the condition of the following vehicle systems before heading out on the road:

- Ignition
- Brakes
- Wiring
- Hoses and fan belts
- Spark plugs
- Air, fuel and emissions filters, and PCV valve
- Distributor
- Battery
- Tire wear and air pressure
- Antifreeze level and freeze line

Know What to Do to Avoid a Crash

You've done all you can to prepare your car, you've checked the weather, but suddenly you find yourself driving in a slippery mess. If visibility is severely limited due to a whiteout, pull off the road and don't even attempt to drive farther until conditions improve.

But sometimes water or ice on the road can surprise drivers, even with little to no precipitation. Do you know how to prevent a skid? Would you know what to do if you ended up sliding toward another vehicle or fixed object? If you don't want to end up in a crash AAA offers some winter driving tips.

- Never mix radial tires with other types of tires

- Avoid using your parking brake to slow or stop
- Do not use cruise control in wintery conditions
- Look and steer in the direction you want to go
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly
- Increase following distance to 8 to 10 seconds
- Know whether you have antilock brakes, which will "pump" the brakes for you in a skid
- If possible, don't stop when going uphill
- Keep your gas tank at least half-full
- If you do get stranded, don't try to push your vehicle out of snow
- Signal distress with a brightly colored cloth tied to the antenna or in a rolled up window

Don't Leave Home Without These

In an emergency situation, in addition to a full tank of gas and fresh antifreeze, National Safety Council recommends having these with you at all times:

- Properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and tripod jack
- Shovel
- Jumper cables
- Tow and tire chains
- Bag of salt or cat litter for better tire traction or to melt snow
- Tool kit
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Reflective triangles or flares
- Compass
- First aid kit
- Windshield cleaner
- Ice scraper and snow brush
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Scissors and string or cord
- Nonperishable, high-energy foods like unsalted, canned nuts, dried fruits and hard candy
- Blankets, mittens, socks and hats

SAFETY MEASURES FOR CHANGING WEATHER

SOURCE: WWW.SAFETYSERVICESCOMPANY.COM

Changing weather is often nature's way of telling you that winter is on its way. Whether you like it or not, it can happen while you're on the job. The best you can do is prepare for this phenomenon. After all, when you're uncomfortable, you're more at risk of committing mistakes and meeting accidents. So read on, and know more about maintaining safety during changing weather.

- Layer clothing so you can create air pockets that help retain body heat.
- Wear at least three layers to keep yourself warm. It's best to have nylon for the outer layer (to break the wind), down or wool for the middle layer (to absorb sweat) and cotton or synthetic weave for the inner layer (to allow ventilation).
- Prepare garments that can protect or cover your head, feet, hands and face.
- Avoid donning dirty or greasy clothing since it has poor insulating properties
- Erect toe boards, screens, or guardrail systems to prevent objects from falling from higher levels.
- Erect a canopy structure and keep potential fall objects far enough from the higher level so the objects cannot be blown over the edge. Secure all objects that high winds could displace. Guardrails must be installed at all open sides.
- Barricade the area where objects could fall, and prohibit employees from entering the barricaded area.
- When heaters are used in confined spaces, special care shall be taken to provide sufficient ventilation in order to ensure proper combustion, maintain the health and safety of workmen, and limit temperature rise in the area.
- Inspect controls of all portable heaters. Remove immediately if any damage has occurred.
- Heaters used in the vicinity of combustible tarpaulins, canvases, or similar coverings shall be located away from the coverings. Fasten coverings securely in high winds. Always make sure a fire extinguisher is readily available in the work site.