



## VFIS NEWS: SPRING SAFETY TIPS FOR THE COMMUNITY

### **DO YOUR HOMEWORK WHEN IT COMES TO SPRING SAFETY TIPS**

With warmer weather and longer days approaching, people in the community are emerging from their winter cocoons to focus on long-neglected projects like spring cleaning, home repairs and yard work.

Many are also lacing up their shoes for their first outdoor walk or jog of the season. These activities can be extremely beneficial, but they also involve a variety of health and safety hazards that can be avoided with the proper precautions.

To help ensure everyone in our community stays safe this season, McCandless-Franklin Park Ambulance Authority offers the following safety tips from our insurance carrier VFIS and suggest you post them where they can be seen by your family and or co-workers.

These are just a few of the safety precautions to consider during the spring. It is also a great time to replace your smoke detector batteries, make sure your fire extinguishers are placed in proper locations around your home and ensure you have a working flashlight and battery powered radio for spring storms.

If an emergency does come up, remember to contact 9-1-1 right away.

By taking the right precautions when warmer weather beckons, you and those around you can enjoy a safer, healthier spring.

### **CLEANING SAFETY REMINDERS**

Nature is undergoing a fresh start and so are homeowners who are ready to clean up the debris that has been accumulating in basements, storage sheds and garages over the winter:

- Household and pool chemicals, paints and poisons should be properly marked and stored under lock and key, away from children's reach. Dispose of any that are leaking, expired or that look bad.
- When cleaning up hazardous chemicals wear rubber gloves and follow the safety directions on the package. Never mix chemicals in the same container. If you don't know how to dispose of them, seek outside advice. Never put them in the trash or pour them down the drain.
- Make sure gasoline and cleaning fluids are well marked and stored in a cool, dry place away from the house and out of reach of children and pets. Use only approved containers for gasoline storage.
- Never use gasoline to clean skin, clothes, auto parts or floors.
- Clean up work areas. Put dangerous tools, adhesives, matches or other work items away from children's reach.
- Check your barbecue grill for leaks and cracks and be sure to store any propane tanks away from your house and garage.
- Remove all fire hazards, including stacks of rags, newspapers and magazines. Pay special attention to the spaces around your furnace, hot water tank, fireplace, space heaters and dryer, as well as under the stairs.



## YARDWORK SAFETY REMINDERS

Itching to get the yard into shape for the summer? Here are ways to help ensure your spring spruce-up is disaster-free:

- Limber up. Yard chores may seem easy, but they involve muscles you probably haven't used in a while.
- Always wear protective clothing when you handle pesticides and fertilizers.
- More than 75,000 people are injured in lawn mowing accidents each year. 10,000 of them are children.
  - Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe operations.
  - Pick up or rake stones and loose debris before mowing to help prevent them from being launched into the air.
  - Wear sturdy shoes while mowing. Do not wear sandals.
  - Wear eye and hearing protection.
  - Always start and refuel mowers outdoors.
  - When refueling your mower, make sure the engine is off and cool.
    - Don't spill gasoline on a hot engine, and
    - Don't smoke while pouring gasoline.
- Lawn trimmers, edgers, pruners and power saws also contribute to injuries and death each year.
  - Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation.
  - Inspect the tool for damage. Do NOT use it if there are problems.
  - Use proper eye and hearing protection.
  - Make sure blade guards are in place on all cutting equipment.
  - Unplug all tools when not in use.
  - Make sure the tool is in the "off" position before you plug it in.
  - Store gasoline-powered equipment away from potential ignition sources (i.e. pilot light).
  - Make sure you use the right tool for the task at hand.
  - When pruning trees, be careful not to let metal ladders or trimmers contact overhead wires.
- Before you do any hands on weed removal:
  - Make sure you know how to identify poison ivy, sumac, oak and similar toxic plants.
  - Find out ahead of time how to treat the rashes they cause to reduce the irritation.



## OUTDOOR EXERCISE REMINDERS

Ready for some outdoor exercise and adventure?

Here are a few pointers:

- Winter's inactive muscles can take only so much. Don't overdo it, build up slowly to avoid strains.
- Don't wander onto frozen rivers, lakes or ponds in the spring, you don't know how thin the ice is.
- Spring's extra rain and thawing snow can cause normally safe rivers, streams and creeks to turn treacherous. Even standing on banks can be risky as they can be undercut by rushing water and give in under your weight.
- Springtime is also severe weather time. If thunderstorms threaten, go immediately into a building or enclosed vehicle.
- For tornadoes, go to the nearest safe structure or your basement or an interior first floor room. If there is no time to follow these precautions, take cover in a ditch or depression in the ground.

## LADDER SAFETY REMINDERS

Ready to do some home repairs? More than 90,000 people visit the emergency room each year, because of ladder mishaps. Here are a few safety tips:

- Read the manufacturer's instructions for guidelines for weight and height limits as well as for the proper use of their product.
- Inspect the ladder before using it to make sure there are no loose or broken rungs.
- Is the ladder the right length for the job? Many accidents happen from overextending your reach.
- Make sure the ladder is completely open and that all of its feet are planted on a firm, level surface. Extension ladders should not be placed at an angle that is too extreme.
- Avoid using metal ladders near electrical sources.
- Face the ladder when climbing and descending.
- Maintain three points of contact with the ladder while climbing. Half of all ladder accidents are due to carrying items as they climb.

