

SMART THINKING

Spring 2017



Spring into Safety

As the temperatures rise and spring arrives, it's a good idea to inspect your home or business for any maintenance that may need to be completed. Here are a few tips to help ensure your property is safe and ready for warmer weather!

- Check fire extinguishers and smoke alarms to make sure they are in good condition. Replace smoke alarm batteries.
- Clear leaves and debris from gutters and downspouts.
- Inspect any trees for damage or rot and remove as needed.
- Examine sidewalks and parking areas for cracks, sunken sections or loose stone work that could be hazardous.
- Check stairs for any loose boards or railings.
- Replace any burned out light bulbs in high traffic areas.
- Replace any mats with curled edges, or those that do not have non-slip backings.
- Repaint any tire stops and curbing to ensure they are clearly visible.

Lastly, be aware that as Spring approaches, temperatures can still dip below freezing overnight. That can be troublesome if ice melts during the day and refreezes overnight, creating dangerous conditions on walkways and driveways. Have salt or sand readily available to treat surfaces until temperatures remain above freezing.

How to Prevent Job Site Injuries

PLAN AHEAD

Conduct a thorough job safety analysis of all tasks involving heights. Begin by deciding how the job will be done, what tasks will be involved and what safety equipment will be needed to complete each task. Have a first aid kit on hand along with emergency numbers.

PROVIDE EQUIPMENT

When working at heights greater than six feet, workers are at risk for serious injury if a fall occurs. Safety railings should be in place and scaffolding should be fully planked. Safety equipment must match the duties and job being performed.

PROPER TRAINING

Falls can be prevented when everyone on site understands proper set-up and safe use of equipment. Train workers in hazard recognition and the safe use of ladders, scaffolding, fall protection systems and other equipment they'll be using on the job.

Good practices for ladders:

- Use the correct ladder for the job and visually inspect for any defects.
- Erect at the correct angle.
- Secure the ladder at the top.
- Ladders should extend a minimum of 36" above the top landing.
- Avoid over-reaching by positioning the ladder close to your work.
- Protect the base of any ladder to prevent pedestrians or autos from bumping into it.
- Do not work off of ladders on uneven ground without securing the bottom of the ladder.



For more information on how to prevent job site injuries, including a helpful checklist, check out the **For Your Protection** section of our website at mmgins.com



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Between the Tires: Spring Driving Hazards

With winter weather taking a backseat you may be cranking up the music, rolling down the windows and thinking the roads are safe again. Unfortunately, that's not always true. Spring driving comes with a fair amount of hazards, including:

BLACK ICE. Temperatures often fall back below freezing overnight in the Spring, causing melting ice and snow on the roadways to refreeze. Early morning travel can be slick and dangerous.

POT HOLES AND FROST HEAVES. Snow plows, salt, sand, and ice and snow buildup can damage the road surface over the course of the winter months. Slow down to avoid damaging your car on these hazards.

SPRING RAIN AND FOG. As the weather warms up we tend to see more rain, which means more water on the road, flooded roads and the risk of hydroplaning. Drive cautiously, wet roads increase the time it takes to stop your vehicle. Fog also becomes a concern, adjust your speed accordingly.

ANIMAL ACTIVITY. Spring is a very active time for many animals. Dusk and dawn tend to be particularly active times of the day for a lot of animals, including deer, moose, and bear.

INCREASED TRAFFIC. It's not just other cars and trucks on the roads. Cyclists, motorcycles and pedestrians will become a more frequent sight as the temperatures rise. Road work also tends to pick back up, be aware of crews working in or near roadways.

Stay alert to the challenges of Spring driving. By putting your safety first, you'll be able to enjoy the ride!



Clothes Dryers – The Hidden Fire Danger in Your Home

Doing laundry is something most of us do on a daily basis and consider it as natural as eating or sleeping. But did you know that the leading cause of home dryer fires is **failure to properly clean the dryer?**

Taking care of your clothes dryer is important for home fire safety and by following the tips below, you can help protect your home and prevent a dryer fire:

- Make sure you clean your lint filter before or after each load of laundry.
- Don't use your dryer without a lint filter.
- Don't forget to remove the lint that has collected around the drum.
- Remember to clean the back of the dryer where lint can build up.
- Make sure the air exhaust vent pipe is not restricted and the outdoor vent flap will open up freely when the dryer is in operation.
- If you notice it is taking longer than normal for your clothes to dry, clean the lint out of the vent pipe or have a professional do it for you!
- If you have a gas powered dryer, have it inspected annually by a professional to ensure the gas line and connection are secure and free of leaks.
- Avoid overloading your dryer and always follow the operators manual from the manufacturer.
- Don't leave your clothes dryer running if you leave home or when you go to bed.

