

JANUARY IS

RADON

ACTION

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A Rough Part of Winter

Shoveling, combined with the cold weather, can place quite a bit of stress on your body, increasing your risk of injury. For older and more sedentary individuals, the likelihood of injury is even greater. Learn to minimize your risks.

- Avoid caffeine or nicotine before shoveling, especially if you have a history of or are at high risk for a heart attack. These stimulants can increase your heart rate and cause your blood vessels to constrict, which places extra stress on the heart. If you have a heart condition, respiratory issues or back problems, check with your doctor before doing any shoveling.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- Dress in layers and be sure to wear a hat, gloves and sturdy, non-skid waterproof footwear. Avoid wearing scarves or hats that block your vision, and wear sunglasses or goggles to reduce glare.
- Move slowly and cautiously, and watch where you're walking. What might look like wet pavement could be black ice, so be extra careful. When walking down stairs, plant your feet securely on each step and hold the handrail firmly.
- Before shoveling, warm up for about 10 minutes. Do some basic exercises to stretch your back, arms and legs, and walk or march in place. "Warm" muscles generally work more efficiently and are less likely to become injured.
- Try to shovel fresh snow, before it becomes packed or refrozen. It might be helpful to shovel a few times during a snowfall rather than waiting until the storm ends when the snow is deeper and heavier.
- If possible, try pushing the snow rather than lifting. When lifting, pick up small amounts of snow at a time using your legs, not your back. Scoop the snow in a forward motion and step in the direction as you throw the snow. Avoid twisting and tossing the snow over your shoulder or to the side.
- Switch hands periodically and alternate the side to which you're throwing snow to more evenly distribute the workload and repetitive muscle use.
- Use a sturdy snow shovel that has open ends to allow you to easily toss the snow to the side.
- Pace yourself. Be sure to take frequent breaks to rest and avoid overexertion. Exhaustion can make you more susceptible to injury, hypothermia and frostbite.

According to the American Journal of Emergency Medicine, shoveling snow accounts for more than 11,500 emergency-room visits each year.

Most importantly, if you begin to experience any pain in your chest, arm or neck, shortness of breath or profuse sweating, stop shoveling immediately and seek emergency medical attention.

You Can't See, Smell or Taste It

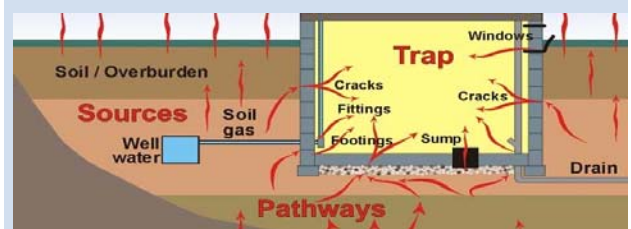
Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive gas release in rock, soil and water formed from the breakdown of uranium. You can't see it, smell it, or taste it, but an elevated radon level in your home may be affecting your health and the health of your family. Exposure to radon over prolonged periods, may damage lung tissue. It is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers in the US.

Radon is drawn into a house through the slab, basement or crawlspace from small holes, cracks, plumbing penetrations or sump pumps. When radon enters a home, it decays into radioactive particles that have a static charge, which attracts them to particles in the air. These particles can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe. As the radioactive particles break down further, they can damage lung tissue.

Radon levels are not uniform throughout the US. Your home's radon level may actually be much higher or lower than your neighbor's. The EPA, US Surgeon General and the CT Department of Public Health (DPH) urge everyone to protect their health by testing their homes to prevent unnecessary exposure. Testing is easy to do and should only take a few minutes.

Should high levels of radon be detected in your home, you can take steps to fix the problem to protect you and your family.

For more information on radon, radon testing and mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction, call the Connecticut Department of Public Health at (860) 509-7367 or visit their website at www.ct.gov/dph, or the EPA's web site at www.epa.gov/radon. The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) urges Connecticut residents to test their homes for radon.



Shop Talk (or good safety advice wherever you use tools)

Safe work habits can make your work day go more smoothly - and they can save your life. From the start of your shift to the end, practice safe work routines.

- Start your shift by checking your work area for hazards. Is there anything different about the area since you left? Perhaps there are renovations under way, or maybe equipment was damaged during the previous shift. Is there anything different about the work you are doing today which will require different procedures or protective equipment?
- Remove or report hazards which can cause you to trip or slip. Look out for objects on the floor and in traffic areas, as well as slippery walking surfaces. If you work at elevations, use the recommended fall protection equipment.
- Read the label and the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) before using any chemical. Be sure you know what the chemical is supposed to do, and what precautions you should take to protect yourself and others.
- Respect electricity because it can kill. Report unsafe electrical conditions, such as loose connections and damaged cables, plugs or outlets. Immediately report any electrical shock, no matter how minor it seems.
- Wear your Personal Protective Equipment. This may include a hard hat, gloves, safety boots, and protective eye wear. Safety glasses must be worn at all times in shop work areas.
- Be aware of fire hazards. Clean up clutter and accumulations of trash.
- Prevent back injuries by learning to lift safely. Use the strength of your legs, not your back, to lift an object. Get help to lift heavy objects, if necessary.
- Use the right tool for the job and use it correctly.
- Beware of machine hazards. Never tamper with a machine guard.
- Make a habit of looking out for your personal security. Walk and work in well-lighted, secure areas. Report any suspicious activities to YPD.
- Take responsibility for your own safety and health - and that of your fellow worker. All of the safety policies and health programs in the world won't protect you if you don't look after yourself.
- Get enough sleep and rest before working.
- Before leaving a shop tidy up your work area, ensure tools are properly shutdown, and report any potential hazards or problems.

Safety habits need continual review. Examine your work area and your work habits. Ask yourself continually, "Can I get injured if I do things this way?" If the answer is yes, talk to your supervisor about a better way to do the task.

Tool Tip

Consider RoboReel for your next cord reel. Unlike spring-loaded versions this motor-driven system winds the cord neatly and under control at the touch of a button. Moreover, smart technology senses when power is on and prevents the cord from retracting if a power tool is in use. So you won't have to worry about it retracting and pulling a power tool out of your hand. Additional safety features include thermal protection and an emergency shutoff if the cord is accidentally severed. The system includes 50 feet of heavy-duty 12 gauge corkscrew resistant cord and includes a 4 year warranty. For information visit: <http://roboreel.com/>

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EVALUATION • RESPONSE • PREVENTION
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT • TRAINING

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Rules of the Road



How many times have you made a New Year's resolution and never really followed through? All those promises we make to ourselves, with every intention of following through, but usually end up breaking before January is over.

Here are 9 resolutions that are actually doable and ones you'll want to stick to. Keeping these resolutions will go a long way toward increasing your driving safety and that of your family.

- I resolve not to drive when I've been drinking or if I'm impaired by drug or medication.
- I resolve not to ask anyone who has been drinking, "Are you okay to drive?", because I know that they really aren't.
- I resolve to be the designated sober driver for my friends or family whenever they ask and to support the sober driver in my group.
- I resolve to give my kids a safe ride home – no questions asked.
- I resolve to turn off my phone or put it out of reach when I'm driving so I don't get distracted.
- I resolve to make sure everyone in the car is buckled up on every ride, day or night.
- I resolve to follow speed, red light, safe turns and all other traffic laws.
- I resolve to be a courteous commuter.
- I resolve to share the road with motorists, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians alike.

As a member of the University community, you have safety responsibilities to yourself, your co-workers, the public and our environment. How you work can have a major influence on others, so always consider your actions in terms of how they might impact yourself and others, and what steps are necessary to prevent harm or injury. Information on EHS services are listed in our "EHS At a Glance" brochure which can be found at: <http://ehs.yale.edu/sites/default/files/ehsbrochure.pdf>.

There is always a safety professional available to answer your questions and provide you with any information you may need to do your job safely. Be sure to find out who the safety advisor assigned to your area is at: <http://ehs.yale.edu/safety-advisors>.