



# FALL 2020

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS NEWSLETTER

As the air turns cooler and leaves drop from the trees, it is important to keep a few important fall safety tips in mind. With proper precautions and safety awareness, your family and friends can enjoy that crisp autumn weather while avoiding some of the dangers that come with the season.

*Distributed by Chippewas of the Thames  
Justice Department's Emergency  
Management Coordinator*

## INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE

- DEBRIS BURNING
- POWER OUTAGES
- FALL DRIVING TIPS
- BOATING SAFETY

# DEBRIS BURNING TIPS FOR FALL

---

*Learn before you burn. When burning yard waste and debris, follow these important steps.*

---

## CHECK THE CONDITION

---

*Before you start up a blaze in your fire pit, check the local weather forecast. Be sure to not use your fire pit on unusually windy days, as the wind can make it hard to light the kindling and could blow sparks to surrounding brush or structures, potentially starting a fire. Also, always check the direction of the wind before you start your fire.*

---



## LOOK UP

---

*Choose a safe burning site away from powerlines, overhanging limbs, buildings, vehicles, and equipment. You will need at least three times the height of the pile of vertical clearance.*

---

## LOOK AROUND

---

*Keep your yard waste fire no more than 4 feet in circumference and 3 feet high and create a fire break surrounded by gravel or mineral soil (dirt) that is at least 10 feet in all directions. Keep the surroundings watered down during the burn and have a shovel close by. Never use fire starters or gasoline on yard waste fires. Before you light, get a hose ready and keep a shovel and metal rake on hand. A shovel allows you to smother sparks and fire with dirt in an emergency while the rake allows you to quickly return logs or branches that roll off the fire.*

---

# PREPARE YOUR PILE

---

*Burn only yard waste from your own property, such as leaves, small branches, grass, and other yard clippings. Do not burn poison oak, poison ivy, or poison sumac. Burning these poisonous plants will fill the air with highly toxic smoke. It is discouraged to burn household garbage such as plastic, bleached paper, Styrofoam, batteries and any treated wood and construction garbage, or plastic containers that held pesticides at any time as the smoke may contain hazardous fumes. Keep your piles small and manageable. Add additional debris as the fire burns down*

---

## BURN BARREL

---

*If using a burn barrel, make sure it's made entirely of metal, properly equipped (at least three evenly spaced, three-inch, screened vents and metal top screen) and in good condition.*

---



## WHEN ITS OUT

---

*Always stay with your fire until it is completely out. Drown the fire with water, turn over the ashes with a shovel and drown it again. Repeat several times.*

---



# DURING A POWER OUTAGE

- First, check whether the power outage is limited to your home. If your neighbours' power is still on, check your own circuit breaker panel or fuse box. If the problem is not a breaker or a fuse, check the service wires leading to the house. If they are obviously damaged or on the ground, stay at least 10 meters back and notify your electric supply authority. Keep the number along with other emergency numbers near your telephone.
- If your neighbours' power is also out, notify your electric supply authority.
- Turn off all tools, appliances and electronic equipment, and turn the thermostat(s) for the home heating system down to minimum to prevent damage from a power surge when power is restored. Also, power can be restored more easily when there is not a heavy load on the electrical system.
- Turn off all lights, except one inside and one outside, so that both you and hydro crews outside know that power has been restored.
- Don't open your freezer or fridge unless it is absolutely necessary. A full freezer will keep food frozen for 24 to 36 hours if the door remains closed.
- Never use charcoal or gas barbecues, camping heating equipment, or home generators indoors or in garages. They give off carbon monoxide. Because you can't smell or see it, carbon monoxide can cause health problems and is life-threatening.
- Use proper candle holders. Never leave lit candles unattended and keep out of reach of children. Always extinguish candles before going to bed.
- Listen to your battery-powered or wind-up radio for information on the outage and advice from authorities.



# AFTER A POWER OUTAGE

- Do not enter a flooded basement unless you are sure the power is disconnected.
- Do not use flooded appliances, electrical outlets, switch boxes or fuse-breaker panels until they have been checked and cleaned by a qualified electrician.
- Replace the furnace flue (if removed) and turn off the fuel to the standby heating unit.
- Switch on the main electric switch (before, check to ensure appliances, electric heaters, TVs, microwaves computers, etc. were unplugged to prevent damage from a power surge).
- Give the electrical system a chance to stabilize before reconnecting tools and appliances. Turn the heating-system thermostats up first, followed in a couple of minutes by reconnection of the fridge and freezer. Wait 10 to 15 minutes before reconnecting all other tools and appliances.
- Close the drain valve in the basement.
- Turn on the water supply. Close lowest valves/taps first and allow air to escape from upper taps.
- Make sure that the hot water heater is filled before turning on the power to it.
- Check food supplies in refrigerators, freezers and cupboards for signs of spoilage. If a freezer door has been kept closed, food should stay frozen 24 to 36 hours, depending on the temperature. When food begins to defrost (usually after two days), it should be cooked; otherwise it should be thrown out.
- As a general precaution, keep a bag of ice cubes in the freezer. If you return home after a period of absence and the ice has melted and refrozen, there is a good chance that the food is spoiled. When in doubt, throw it out!
- Reset your clocks, automatic timers, and alarms.
- Restock your emergency kit so the supplies will be there when needed again.

# SAFETY TIPS FOR FALL DRIVING

---

There's nothing more beautiful than a *fall drive*, but this season brings some unique hazards for drivers. Being aware of these potential dangers can help keep you and your family safe and prevent accidents.

---



## BE AWARE OF POOR VISIBILITY

---

*Falling leaves, while beautiful, can obscure your vision, as can rain and fog. Shorter days are part of the fall season, making it more difficult to see children playing or people walking and riding bicycles. Be aware of limitations in your visibility, and slow down if you can't see well. Use your dimmed headlights in bad weather with decreased visibility. If possible, try not to be on the roads when it's hard to see.*

---

## SLOW DOWN ON WET PAVEMENT

---

*In many areas of the country, rain is common during the autumn. If it's raining, keep a safe distance from the car in front of you. Wet roads make it more difficult to stop. When wet leaves are on roadways, they make the pavement slippery, and it can be difficult for drivers to get good traction.*

---

## WATCH OUT FOR ICE

---

*As the temperatures drop further at night, a driver will need to spend some extra time in the morning scraping frost off his or her vehicle. Shady spots on the roadway may be home to black ice, which a driver may not be aware of until his or her car starts to skid on it.*

---

# SAFETY TIPS FOR FALL BOATERS

---

Autumn boating accidents are far more likely to be fatal than those that occur during the summer months. Although there are many more boating accidents in the summer season, boaters involved in accidents during the fall months are exposed to cold water and other weather hazards. Keep these tips in mind for safe autumn boating.

---

## BE PREPARED FOR CHANGING WEATHER

---

Since fall weather can change quickly, you should always be prepared for possible cold, windy, and wet weather even if the sun is shining. Stay closer to shore, so you can turn back if the weather changes. Bring appropriate clothing, such as warm coats, rain gear, and gloves.

---



## WATCH FOR SIGNS OF HYPOTHERMIA



---

Small open boats combined with cold, wet weather can lead to possible hypothermia. These are a few of the signs you should know.

---

- Shivering or trembling
  - General lack of coordination, including stumbling and dropping things
  - Drowsiness, confusion, and apathy
  - Mumbling and slurring of words
  - Weak pulse and shallow breathing
-