

Safety



While children are in your care, they will engage in activities which enhance their physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth. By "child proofing" your home you are giving the children the freedom to explore, to discover and to learn. During your initial interview, the Home Child Care Caseworker will suggest ways of child proofing your home. A house check will be done every three months to ensure that your home remains safe (see Caregiver Records). Being aware of a child's developmental process is important in making his environment safe. An infant moves very quickly from rolling over to a fast crawl. The toddler who one day is playing quietly in the garden, the next day could be climbing over the fence! Being able to anticipate a child's need to investigate and to grow physically will help you to set up your home for the children in your care.

This section of the manual includes regulations and suggestions for making your home safe for children. The following information is included:

- General Safety in the Home
- Safety in Equipment and Playthings
- Safety in the Car
- Hazardous Products
- Seasonal Outdoor Play
- Playgrounds
- Fire Safety
- Emergency Procedures

It is your responsibility as a caregiver for children to look at your home objectively and try to **prevent** accidents from happening.

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Safety Sense

Preventable injuries are the leading cause of death and permanent disabilities among children aged 1-4 in Canada. Preventable injuries account for more childhood deaths than from all childhood diseases combined, making injuries the number one cause of death among children. Injuries don't just happen; approximately 90% are predictable and preventable. Both unsafe actions and unsafe conditions contribute to preventable injuries. In the Premier's Council of Ontario document, **Yours, Mine and Ours**, a safe, secure and stimulating environment for infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers is recognized as one of the determinants for healthy growth and development.

The leading causes of preventable injuries are:

motor vehicles	drowning	suffocation
fire/burns	falls	poisoning

Of the reported cases of injuries to the Canadian Hospital Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP), only 5% of all weekday, daytime injuries of children under the age of 5 years occurred in a day care setting. These numbers suggest that children in day care may be at less risk for injury than those not in day care. The majority of injuries in a child care setting are minor and most often are cuts, bruises and abrasions.

Children are naturally curious and adventurous. Due to their lack of experience and maturity they do not realize what they are getting themselves into. Children use the environment to play, explore and develop both physical and intellectual skills. Play to children is the equivalent of an adult's work. For all children, minor bumps, scrapes and bruises are a normal part of growing up. Very often these injuries cannot be avoided and they teach children a bit more about the world around them. If all risks are taken out of a child's environment, their growth and development would be compromised. Establishing and maintaining a safe, yet fun, place for children is an important task but can pose a challenge. In many instances, **safety sense is common sense**, but caregivers must also learn to expect the unexpected. Knowing the dangers is the first step to safety.

Many of these injuries are caused by lack of awareness of the potential hazards, the improper use of child-related products or inadequate product maintenance.

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Injury Awareness

Did you know?

- The head is the most commonly injured part of the body because children have larger heads in proportion to the rest of their bodies, compared to adults.
- Toddlers have the highest average number of injuries. These are associated with mastering new skills like running, climbing and jumping.
- Boys appear to be at greater risk than girls.
- Injuries peak in mid morning hours in a child care setting.
- At home, injuries peak in late afternoon and early evening hours.

Protecting Children From Injury:

Most people want to keep children safe. Unfortunately, children are still injured every day. We can work to protect our children by developing a set of skills to help us keep children safe.

1. **Learn to Recognize Hazards.** Read about how and where injuries can occur. Talk to other parents about their experiences. Most of all know your child's abilities but be careful not to over or under estimate those abilities. Ask yourself, "How can my child be injured in this situation?"
2. **Change your Perspective.** Try to see things from your child's level. Get down on the floor. Children are easily attracted to changes in colour, texture and size.
3. **Adopt Safety Attitudes.** This won't be easy because it may involve rethinking attitudes like "It's just part of growing up" and "It won't happen to me."
4. **Choose Safe Behaviours.** You will need to look at **what** you do; **when** you do things; **where** you do things and **why** you do things.
5. **Supervise.** There is no substitute for you. Products are not babysitters. Injuries usually occur when parents and caregivers are distracted or overestimate their child's abilities.
6. **Be Consistent.** Children will test the limits you set for them. Don't relax your safety standards, even once. Don't let anyone talk you into doing something you would not otherwise do.
7. **Be Repetitive.** As adults, if we hear something three times we are likely to remember it. Children need to hear things many times in order to learn.
8. **Be Prepared.** There will be times when, despite your best efforts, injuries still occur. Have a first aid kit available and post emergency phone number by every phone in the house.
9. **Re-evaluate.** Look for changes in your home. What is your child able to do now? Do his new abilities require a different approach to keep him safe?

Children's Products

Did you Know?

- Injuries associated with children's products tend to most commonly occur in children under two years of age.
- A large proportion of injuries involved some type of fall from or out of the product.
- The most common parts of the body injured are the head, neck and face.
- Approximately three-quarters (3/4) of reported injuries require advice only or minor treatment in the emergency room.

Product Regulations

Not all children's products have standards/regulations governing their design and manufacture. In Canada, the Hazardous Products Act regulates the following products:

- Carriages and Strollers
- Cribs and Cradles
- Children's Sleepwear
- Expansion Gates
- Infant Feeding Bottle Nipples
- Pacifiers
- Playpens
- Toys
- Walkers

Other products may have either mandatory or voluntary standards in the United States. As a result, Canadian children may benefit from these regulations as a vast majority of children's products are manufactured for sale in both Canada and the United States.

General Safety tips for All Children's Products

- Always follow all the manufacturer's instructions for set-up and use of each product.
- Only use if the child fits within all age, height, weight and developmental limits specified by the manufacturer.
- Always supervise a child when using any product.
- Always use the occupant restraint system (seat belt).
- Check the product regularly to make sure there are no broken or missing parts.
- Replace and/or repair all broken and missing parts immediately. Do not use a product that is in need of repair. When repairing a product, use only parts that are provided or recommended by the manufacturer.
- Throw out any products that cannot be repaired properly.
- Throw out products that do not meet current safety standards.

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If there is any doubt about the safety of a product, do not use it!

A great resource that can help you assess the products in your home to determine if they are still safe is a booklet produced by Health Canada, Consumer Product Safety – “Information of Dealers of Second-Hand Children’s Products”. (Available online at: www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

What To Do If You Identify Problems With A Product

- Stop using the product immediately.
- Check the instructions for additional information.
- Contact the manufacturer to alert them of the problem.
- Contact Health Canada, Product Safety to alert them of the problem at (1-866-662-0666).
- Repair the product if the manufacturer is able to provide you with replacement parts.
- Destroy and discard the product if you are unable to repair the product properly
- Some manufacturers may ask that the product be returned back to them to be repaired or replaced.

What are Product Recalls

In Canada, distributors or manufacturers of a product may voluntarily recall products when they become aware of a defect in a product that makes it unsafe. Although Health Canada’s product Safety Program does not have power to order a compulsory recall of a children’s product, Health Canada works cooperatively with companies to ensure that dangerous products are taken off the market.

It is important to check regularly for recalls to any children’s product. This information can be obtained from the manufacturer, either through their internet website or by phone. It is a good idea to fill out and return the product registration card to the manufacturer. The manufacturer may try to contact your centre if a recall is issued.

It may be helpful to keep a list of all children’s products in your home along with the name of the manufacturer, their phone number, the model name and number of the product as well as the date that the product was made. This information can be found on a label attached directly to the product.

Safety in Equipment and Playthings

It is the responsibility of the Home Child Care Caregiver to provide appropriate equipment for the children in her care.

A child under 18 months must have a crib or padded playpen with his own bedding.

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If you have difficulty providing equipment as described above, please discuss the problem with the Home Child Care Home Child Care Caseworker or phone the local Infant and Toddler Safety Association.

Toys

- Select only toys suitable for the child's age group, and make sure to read and follow all instructions that come with the toys.
- Toys with small parts are dangerous for children under three years. Keep them out of their reach.
- Check toys regularly and throw away broken toys which may have sharp edges.
- Keep plush toys and soft toys away from stoves, fireplaces, heaters and other sources of heat.

Toy Boxes

- Make sure that large toy boxes have good ventilation in case a child climbs inside.
- Choose toy boxes with lids that are lightweight and have good supporting hinges; heavy lids have fallen on children's necks causing death.
- Toy Boxes should be inspected regularly to ensure the hinges are secure and well-maintained.

Toys with Batteries

- Make sure batteries in toys for young children are properly installed and not accessible to the child.
- It is dangerous to mix older batteries with newer ones, or to mix alkaline with carbon, or rechargeable with non-rechargeable.
- A child should not take battery-operated toys to bed.
- If a child swallows a button battery, call your doctor or poison control centre immediately.

Baby Walkers

Health Canada has deemed the use of a baby walker as unsafe and has banned the sale and importation of them in Canada.

*** The Home Child Care program does not allow the use of walkers for children using child care in our caregiver homes.**

(Hazardous Products Act, Part 1, Schedule 1)

Hazardous Products

Children are naturally curious and will taste, touch and smell anything within their reach. Any areas where medications, cleaning fluids, flammable materials or chemicals can be found are danger zones for children.

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Almost any product in your home can be harmful. It is important to keep this in mind when you Safety Proof your home. It is the requirement of Home Child Care that all poisonous and hazardous products are out of sight and out of reach of all children.

This section contains a list of products that are considered to be hazardous and poisonous. Being aware of these items will help you to properly "Safety Proof" your home.

The following is a list of the most common items that are accidentally swallowed by young children:

- Housecleaning Products
- Plants
- Children's Analgesics (i.e. Tylenol)
- Cough and Cold Products
- Bleach
- Antihistamines
- Insecticides
- Mercury from a Thermometer
- Perfumes
- Children's Vitamins
- Mouthwash (alcohol)

It is also important to note that cigarette butts are dangerous. Eating 4 cigarette butts can kill a baby. It is important to know the name of all the plants in your home in case of ingestion.

Poison Control Centre 1-800-268-9017

What to do if a child accidentally swallows or ingests a dangerous substance:

- a) Give the child a drink of water (not milk).
- b) Bring **child** and **substance** ingested to the phone & call
- c) You will need to tell them the child's:
 - Age
 - Weight
 - What he has taken
 - How much
 - When taken (i.e. time)

Safety in the Car

Car trips should be discussed with parents during the initial interview. In some cases, parents will not want their child to be transported in your car. Trips outside the Region must be pre-authorized by the parent and your caseworker. A “Consent for Excursions & Outings “outside the Region form must be filled out and signed. Proper safety restraints need to be used when children are in your car (see below). If children are travelling in your car, it is important to inform your insurance company. Some insurance companies may want to increase your liability coverage.

Note: Home Child Care liability insurance does not cover you or the children in your care while in the car.

Infant Only Seat - A car seat that is only used rear-facing for children from birth until they reach either the weight or height limits specified by the manufacturer. (Check your seat's instructions for specific upper weight and height limits)

Rear-facing Infant/Child Car Seat - A car seat that is used rear-facing until the child is over 10 kg (22 lb.) **and** able to pull up to a stand alone as furniture, and typically one year of age.

Forward-facing Car Seat- Once ready to face forward, these seats are used forward-facing, tethered for children under 18 kg (40 lb.); it is the law.

Some children may be too tall for the particular car seat they are currently using – the middle of their ears is above the top of the car seat. Some child/booster seats can accommodate a taller child until he/she reaches 18 kg (40 lb.).

High Back Booster - High back boosters provide head support, which is important if the vehicle seat back is low. They are used with a lap/shoulder belt and usually are positioned for shoulder belt comfort.

Booster seats must be used by children who:

- are between 18 kg (40 lb) and 36 kg (80 lb)
- are less than 145 cm (4’9”) tall
- are under 8 years of age

Backless Booster - Backless boosters keep the lapbelt from sliding up on the abdomen in a collision. They are used with a lap/shoulder belt. Some models come with straps to help position the shoulder belt.

* A booster seat is not a substitute for a car seat for children under 18 kg (40 lb). By law, children less than 18 kg (40 lb) must ride in a CMVSS approved care seat.

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Seat Belt - To fit most adult seat belts properly, a child should:

- weigh more than 36 kg. (80 lb).
- have a sitting height of at least 145 cm (4'9")
- be able to sit with his/her back against the vehicle seat back for the entire trip.
- be able to bend their knees over the front of the vehicle seat without slouching for the entire trip.
- be able to wear the shoulder belt across the centre of his/her chest for the entire trip.
- be able to wear the lap belt low across the pelvis, touching the upper thighs for the entire trip.

See Appendix 1 Highway Traffic Act Reg 613

Playgrounds

What great fun - a trip to the park or to the playground! Kids love it but as a caregiver you have to be on the alert to keep them safe.

Since 1990 there has been a voluntary standard in Canada for play spaces and equipment. Canadian Standards Association (CSA) in consultation with industry, consumer groups and government agencies developed a standard for public play spaces. This standard was updated in 1998 and was republished under the title CAN/CSA-Z614 Children's Play spaces and Equipment.

Having the standard is great but it only covers equipment installed after it was published. Parents and caregivers still have some work to do to ensure their children are safe on a public playground.

Before You Go To the Park

- Pick the right park for your children. Not all equipment is meant for all children, so if you have a group of toddlers, find a park with equipment designed for younger children (age 2 - 5 years).
- Make sure all scarves are tucked in. Remove cords and drawstrings from jackets and other clothing. They can catch on equipment and strangle a child.
- Consider taking a cellular phone and first aid kit for emergencies.

At the Park

- Check under and around the equipment for broken glass, discarded needles, animal feces etc. Remove all unwanted material carefully and dispose of it in a safe manner.
- Check the equipment and remove any ropes or skipping ropes tied to the equipment. These can strangle a child.
- Look for broken or vandalized equipment. It may be unsafe for your children to play on.
- Check for hazards like loose bolts, exposed concrete, shallow protective surfacing. Report unsafe conditions immediately to the owner of the park.

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- In the summer, check metal slides to ensure they are not too hot to play on. On sunny days, in full sun, metal can burn young skin quickly.
- Make sure children remove their bike helmets before playing on the structure.
- In the winter watch out for ice! The protective surfacing that works well in warm weather won't do the job of absorbing an impact if it is ice covered. Keep children off the equipment when there is an ice build up.
- Active supervision - Keep your eye on all the children and move through the play area regularly.
- Teach children there are rules to follow on the playground. Pre-schoolers should be able to learn up to three rules.
- In the event of a serious accident, report it immediately to the park owner to make them aware of the incident

Backyard Play Structures

They're fun! Children love playing on them: swing sets, jungle gyms, ride-on toys, playhouses, and climbers. However if not properly put together, installed or maintained, they can cause injuries. Even the best designed and maintained structures can be hazardous if children are not supervised or taught some basic rules about their proper use.

Please read the following recommendations to make sure that your backyard play structures are safe for children in your care.

Location is Important

Good Practice

- Swing sets should be located a safe distance from fences, trees, houses, electrical wires or other obstacles as well as from other play equipment so children don't run into the path of the swings.
- All equipment should be located on surface which will reduce the impact of a fall, such as wood chips or sand. Grass does not effectively cushion a fall. The area should be kept free from broken glass or other debris.
- Metal slides can become too hot for safe use. Place them in the shade or facing away from the sun.

Assembly is Important

- Assemble and install equipment exactly according to the manufacturer's instructions. If the instructions are not clear, contact the manufacturer or dealer. If it isn't put together properly, the equipment could break or cause a serious injury.
- Keep your instruction sheets. You may need them to make repairs or order parts.
- Making changes to the equipment without the manufacturer's approval could make the structure unsafe.
- Make sure that all nuts and bolts are tight.

Adult Supervision is Essential

- Remove any ropes or skipping ropes tied to the equipment. These could strangle a child.
- Loose clothing, hats with chin straps, cords on hoods, ponchos, scarves and jewellery can get caught on equipment. Make sure that children in your care are dressed safely.
- Check for ice on and under the equipment in the winter. This could cause accidents or injuries.
- Children, especially pre-schoolers need constant supervision. They should never be left alone on play structures. Older children often try to make equipment "more challenging" and use it in unexpected and unintended ways. They may take bigger risks as they develop their physical skills. Young children will try and copy them but not have the skills to stay safe.
- Bicycle helmets must be removed before playing on the equipment.
- Teach your children how to play safe.

Here are a few rules to follow:

No pushing, shoving or horseplay.

No walking in front of or near swings and other moving equipment.

Keep fingers away from moving parts.

Never run down slide beds or slide down head first.

Wait until structures and clothing are dry. Slippery surfaces can cause serious injuries.

Always hold onto hand rails and grips.

Friends are fun but don't overload equipment with too many kids at once.

Never stand on swings or jump off them while they are moving.

Never jump from unsafe heights.

Don't help younger children to climb to unsafe heights.

Health Canada - Health Protection - February 1999

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Seasonal Outdoor Play

Frequent physical activity is essential for healthy growth and development in children and what better way than outdoor play. With proper precautions the outing can be a safe, fun time.

Summertime Safety

The warm sunny days of summer provide a wonderful setting for children to go outdoors and have fun. Unfortunately, summer sunshine can be very dangerous. The thinning of the ozone layer allows more dangerous ultraviolet radiation to reach earth. Children with their sensitive skin are in danger of sun induced damage.

The following suggestions could help provide that safe summer fun:

- Have parent supply a sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher which is safe for their child. (Some children may be sensitive to some ingredients in certain sunscreens.)
- Have parent sign an "Authorization for Application of Sunscreen Lotion" form giving consent for the caregiver to apply the sunscreen.
- Sunscreen should be labelled with child's name.
- Parent should apply sunscreen at home when child is being dressed for the trip to the setting.
- Remember to apply sunscreen to the child's ears, nose, the top of the feet and creases in their arms and legs.
- The caregiver should apply the sunscreen at least 20 minutes before the child is going outside. Reapply every two hours, or more frequently if the child is playing in water or sweating heavily.
- Children should wear wide brimmed sun hats and cool light cotton clothing that covers the arms and legs.
- Whenever possible arrange play times to keep children out of the sun from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to avoid the sun's strongest ultraviolet radiation.
- In the heat of the day arrange appropriate activities in shaded areas geared to the temperature reading. Look at providing more shade in the forms of trees and structures in your children's play area.
- Be aware of children who are on medications which could increase their sensitivity to the sun.
- Keep young children and infants out of the sun as much as possible. Do not use sunscreen on babies under six months of age.
- Be aware of children with sensitivity to Sunstroke (Heat Stroke)
- Remember, cloudy days are not a protection from the sun's rays because 80% of the sun's burning rays get through light clouds, haze and fog to reach the ground.
- Extra care should be taken with children who have red or blonde hair.

- Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is measured on a scale of 0 to 10. The higher the number the more UV rays you will be exposed to and the faster you will burn. Your local radio and TV stations give a UV Index each day.
- Skin damage can also be caused by contact with indirect sun rays reflected off surfaces such as metal, sand and water. Shade alone will not protect children from getting too much sun. Use of a sunscreen and proper clothing is a must for all outdoor activities.
- Check play equipment on a sunny day as the sun can make the equipment very hot and the child could suffer contact burns.
- Have the child drink plenty of liquids in order to replenish body fluids.
- Serve fruit drinks and sticky snacks inside to avoid attracting bees and the possibility of a child being stung.

Smog and Children

Smog is a brownish-yellow, hazy cloud of air pollution that can sometimes be seen over the city on hot summer days. Smog forms when heat and sunlight react with gases and fine particles in the air. The word smog comes from the words "smoke" and "fog".

Smog can:

- cause difficult breathing conditions
- cause eye, nose and throat irritation
- cause wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath
- lower resistance to infections
- make heart and lung conditions worse

Where Does Smog Come From?

Smog comes from many sources, including:

- gasoline and diesel cars, trucks and buses
- factories and utilities
- oil-based paints, solvents and cleaners
- pesticides
- road paving (asphalt) and construction
- lawn mowers
- barbeques

The most harmful components of smog are ground level ozone and fine air borne particles. Ground level ozone forms when pollutants released from gasoline and diesel powered vehicles, and oil-based solvents and cleaners react with heat and sunlight. Fine air borne particles come from many sources, including factories, wind blown dust from construction sites and roads, and vehicle exhaust.

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What is a Smog Alert?

The Ontario Ministry of Environment monitors the air we breathe and provides a rating on how clean the air is. The Ministry of Environment and Environment Canada issue an Air Quality Advisory when the Air Quality Index exceeds 50 due to ground level ozone.

The Public Health Department monitors Air Quality Advisories issued by the Ministry of Environment. When the Ministry of Environment issues an Air Quality Advisory because the Air Quality Index will exceed 50 due to ground level ozone, the Medical Officer of Health in Waterloo Region implements the Smog Alert Response Plan.

The Smog Alert response plan includes an early warning system for the public:

- regular media updates on air quality
- health warnings to help reduce exposure to smog.

When a Smog Advisory is issued by the Ontario Ministry of Environment, the Public Health Department (PHD) faxes media contacts information regarding the smog alert so they can inform the public as soon as possible about what to do to reduce their health risk and contribution to the problem. In addition, the PHD faxes area municipalities a Municipal Notice of the Smog Alert Day so they may implement the appropriate actions identified in their **Clean Air Plans**. Educational institutions, hospitals, nursing homes and daycare centres are also notified.

For a copy of the PHD Smog Brochure, please contact Environmental Health and Lifestyle Resources at 519-883-2008.

How Smog Affects the Health of Children

Children are more likely to experience respiratory effects from smog such as wheezing, coughing and shortness of breathe, because:

- Children breathe in more air than adults and they breathe faster than adults, especially during strenuous activity and play.
- Children tend to breathe through their mouths and by-pass the natural filtering system in the nose. This allows large amounts of polluted air to get directly to their lungs.
- Children spend more time outside than adults.
- Smog increases a child's risk of getting sick. Children are more susceptible to infections than adults; smog reduces the respiratory system's ability to fight infection and remove foreign particles.
- Smog can make the symptoms of childhood asthma and allergies worse.

Protecting the Health of Children on Smog Alert Days

- Reduce children's outdoor work, play or exercise.
- Children with asthma and allergies should avoid being outside.
- Plan activities for children that can be done indoors in a cool, well ventilated place.
- If children must be outside, try to schedule their activities for early in the morning when pollution levels are lowest.
- If children must be outside, avoid peak rush hour times and being around high traffic areas to reduce the exposure to smog.
- Avoid the sun and make sure that children drink plenty of water or natural juice.
- If a child is experiencing symptoms such as tightness in the chest, coughing, or wheezing call the child's parents immediately or call 911 for emergency medical care.

Winter Safety

The wonderful magic of winter and the arrival of snow provide the children with a new outdoor play area. Winter and all the activities can be an enjoyable safe time with some precautions.

- Children need to be dressed in appropriate winter outdoor clothing.
- Attention should be made to avoid overdressing. It can cause the child to sweat and become chilled when he/she stop playing.
- When children become chilled the risk of frostbite increases.
- Scarves should be tucked inside jackets and coats to prevent them from becoming entangled on play equipment etc. and possibly strangling the child.
- Hoods on parkas need to be snugly tied to prevent catching on equipment and choking the child.
- Be aware of both the actual temperature and the wind chill factor; it could be colder than recorded by the thermometer.
- Health and safety factors such as temperatures below -10°C to -15°C (0° - 5°) need to be taken into consideration when making a decision on suitable conditions for outdoor play.
- When outdoors keep the children active, the activities should be geared to the appropriate age levels.
- Be aware of children with sensitivity to frostbite.
- Remember the sunscreen as children can still get a burn.
- Teach children not to lick metal objects in cold weather, the tongue will freeze to the metal and cause a painful injury.
- Be aware of the elements such as freezing rain or icy surfaces on play areas.
- Gear snow play to building snowmen or making angels. Not throwing snow balls.
- The length of time spent outdoors will depend on the activities involved and whether the play area is sheltered or not.
- Discourage the eating of snow as it may contain dirt, pollution, animal feces and other contaminants.

Remember
Common sense is important in any weather safety.

Fire Safety

The Day Nurseries Act requires that:

.....a written procedure is established with respect to evacuation in the event of fire for each location where private home child care is provided.....

To meet these requirements our local fire departments have approved the following Fire Evacuation Plan. Copies of this plan are available from the Home Child Care Caseworker. These are to be posted at all exits of your home.

Home Child Care
Fire Evacuation Plan
(post at each exit)

In case of fire:

- ✓ Stay calm
- ✓ All meet at pre-determined area near exit
- ✓ Close any doors on the way
- ✓ Count children - be sure everyone's there
- ✓ Leave and go to neighbours (prearranged)
- ✓ Call the Fire Department (911), giving the name and address, then wait to answer any questions.

Practice A Fire Drill Once A Month

Children need to understand that the word **fire** signals alarm. It should be understood that the only time that the word is used is for **fire drill** or a **real fire situation**. Having a fire escape plan and practicing fire drill regularly (monthly) will help prepare everyone in the event of a real fire.

In all of these cases, it is very important to stress that everyone keeps calm and follow the practised routine.

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To keep yourself and your children aware of fire safety, your local fire department often offers public information meetings. Any householder may request a visit from the **Fire Prevention officer** of their local **Fire Department**. If your home is visited, please keep a copy of the report for your records.

The Fire Escape Plan

- Make an escape plan of your house and your house and have two escape routes from every room. Make sure everyone knows the plan.
- If you live in an apartment, **never** use the elevator, always use the stairs.
- Special attention must be given to babies and young children.
- Every home should have an approved portable fire extinguisher (Minimum 2A-10BC). Only try to extinguish small fires. Make sure everyone is out of the house safely, and then call the fire department.
- Have a pre-arranged meeting place where everyone must meet to assure that all are safe.

Suggestions for a Fire Drill Practice

1. Warn the children that you are going to set off the smoke alarm. Explain what they are to do when they hear the noise. Follow through with your evacuation plan.
2. Set off the smoke alarm at a time when the children are **not** expecting it. Follow through with your fire evacuation plan.
3. Create a game. Hide a red piece of paper that says **fire**. When the child or adult who finds it yells **fire**, follow your fire evacuation plan.

Fire Safety Requirements

For all homes providing home child care in the region of Waterloo

These requirements have been developed and approved by the seven fire departments in the Region of Waterloo. These requirements apply to all residences that are under agreement with a licensed home child care agency in the Region. This includes the Regional Municipality of Waterloo Home Child Care Program and Wee Watch Private Home Day Care.

Requirements

1. House numbers shall be easily visible from the street.
2. Smoke alarms shall be located on every floor of the dwelling and installed according to the manufacturer's directions. Smoke alarms shall be either electrically operated or battery operated, but must be C.S.A. approved. All smoke alarms shall be visually checked weekly and must be tested **monthly**. Batteries shall be changed every year. It is recommended that in homes with an electrical smoke alarm system that a battery operated smoke alarm be installed on the sleeping level.
3. All rooms in a single family residence used for Home Child Care shall be no more than one storey from an exit to ground. Basements shall not be used for sleeping or napping unless there is an exit directly to the outside.
4. An approved portable fire extinguisher (Minimum 2A-10BC) shall be mounted in an accessible location to the kitchen. This must be between the stove and the exit and must be visible.
The extinguisher should be visually checked by the home owner each month and inspected and tagged annually by a qualified person.
5. All homes used for child care shall have a plan for exit in case of fire. The fire evacuation plan is to be posted at each exit. Home Child Care Caregivers shall practise fire drills once a month with the children in their care and maintain a written record of these drills. To be effective, fire drills should be practised at different times of the day and when children are in different parts of the house.
6. Furnace areas and water heaters shall be kept clear of combustible materials. The clear area shall be at least 3 feet on all exposed sides.
7. Proper fusing and wiring of electrical circuits shall be practised.
8. Fireplaces shall have a screen. Gas and wood stoves must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.
9. Propane shall be stored outside and at least 3 feet from a door or window.
10. Gas shall be stored in an approved container in a garage or storage shed. No more than 2 gals. or 10 litres shall be in storage.
11. Deep frying shall not occur during child care hours.
12. Combustible materials shall not be allowed to accumulate in any part of the house. Exits shall always be accessible and free of clutter.

13. Candles and other open flame burners shall not be used while children are in care.
14. Use of portable heaters is not allowed during child care hours.
15. A Carbon Monoxide (CO) detector which is C.S. A. and /or U.L.C. approved shall be installed on the sleeping level of every home that has a fuel burning appliance (gas, wood, oil) and must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Note - Basement apartments created in a "single family " residence must be approved by the fire department as meeting fire code and must also meet these regulations before they can be used to provide home child care.

Other Emergency Procedures

Tornados:

Prepare a Home Tornado Plan

- Pick a place where family members could gather if a tornado is headed your way. It could be a basement, a centre hallway, bathroom, or closet on the lowest floor. Keep this place uncluttered.
- If you are in a highrise building, you may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor. Pick a place in the hallway in the centre of the building.

Assemble a supply kit containing:

- First Aid Kit and essential medications.
- Canned food and can opener.
- At least three gallons of water per person.
- Protective clothing and blanket.
- Battery powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries.

Stay Tuned for Storm Warnings

- Listen to your local radio or TV stations for updated storm information.
- Know what a tornado **watch** and **warning** means:
 - ✓ A tornado **watch** means a tornado is possible in your area.
 - ✓ A tornado **warning** means a tornado has been sighted and may be headed for your area. Go to safety immediately.

When a Watch is Issued

- Listen to local radio and TV stations for further updates.
- Be alert to changing weather conditions. Rain frequently precedes a tornado, usually with hail and with a heavy downpour.

Safety



When a Warning is Issued

- If you are inside, go to the safe place you picked to protect yourself from glass and other flying objects.
- If you are outside, hurry to the basement of a nearby sturdy building, or lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area.
- If you are in a car, get out immediately and head for safety.

After the Tornado Passes

- Stay out of the damaged area and watch out for fallen power lines.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions.
- Use a flashlight to inspect your home for damage.
- Do not use candles at any time in case of a gas leak.

Natural Gas Leaks:

Natural gas has a distinct, pungent odour so it is easy to detect. Leaking gas can cause an explosion and fire.

If you smell a strong odour of natural gas

- Open the windows.
- Get everyone out at once.
- Do not use the telephone or lighter.
- Do not turn any electrical switches or lights on or off.
- Go to a neighbour's and call 911 immediately.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

Carbon monoxide is a dangerous gas that is produced when heating systems are not working correctly. You cannot smell, taste or see carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide can build up inside a building and can cause severe sickness or death.

Symptoms

- Sudden flu-like illness.
- Dizziness, headaches and sleepiness.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Fluttering or throbbing heart beat.
- Cherry red lips, and pallor.
- Unconsciousness.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning

- Get victim out into fresh air immediately and call 911.
- Get everyone else out and open the windows.

Safety



Blackouts:

Prepare an Emergency Kit including:

- Flashlight.
- Batteries.
- Portable radio.
- At least one gallon of water.
- A small supply of food.
- Due to extreme risk of fire, do not use candles during a blackout.

If you have space in our refrigerator or freezer, consider filling plastic containers with water. Place the container in the fridge or freezer. This chilled or frozen water will help keep food cold if the power goes out.

If you have medication that requires refrigeration, most can be kept in a closed refrigerator for several hours without a problem.

If you have a telephone that requires electricity to work, plan for alternate communication, e.g. cell phone, pager or radio.

Keep your car's gas tank at least half full as gas stations rely on electricity to power their gas pumps.

What to do during a blackout

- Turn off or disconnect appliances, equipment (like air conditioners) or electronics you were using when the power went out. When power comes back on, it may come back on with momentary "surges" or "spikes" that can damage equipment such as computers and motors in appliances like the air conditioner, refrigerator, washer or furnace.
- Leave one light turned on so you'll know when your power returns.
- Leave the doors of your refrigerator and freezer closed to keep your food as fresh as possible.
- Use the phone for emergencies only. Listening to a portable radio can provide the latest information.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel, especially by car. Traffic signals will stop working during an outage.
- Remember equipment such as automated teller machines and elevators may not work during a power outage.
- If it is hot outside, take steps to remain cool. Move to the lowest level of your home. Wear light weight, light coloured clothing. Drink plenty of water.
- If it is cold outside, put on layers of warm clothing. Never burn charcoal for heating or cooking indoors. If the power may be out for a prolonged period, plan to go to another location (friend, relative, public facility) that has heat to keep warm.

Heat Waves:

Know What These Terms Mean

- **Heat wave:** Prolonged period of excessive heat and humidity. The National Weather Service steps up its procedures to alert the public during these periods of excessive heat and humidity.
- **Heat index:** A number in degrees Fahrenheit (F) or Celsius (C) that tells how hot it really feels when relative humidity is added to the actual air temperature. Exposure to full sunshine can increase the heat index by 15 degrees F or 8 degrees C.
- **Heat cramps:** Heat cramps are muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. Although heat cramps are the least severe, they are an early signal that the body is having trouble with the heat.
- **Heat exhaustion:** Heat exhaustion typically occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a hot, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Blood flow to the skin increases, causing blood flow to decrease to the vital organs. This results in a form of mild shock. If not treated, the victim may suffer heat stroke.
- **Heat stroke:** Heat stroke is life-threatening. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly.
- **Sunstroke:** Another term for heat stroke.

If a Heat Wave is Predicted or Happening

- Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- Stay indoors as much as possible. If air conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor, out of the sunshine. Try to go to a public building with air conditioning each day for several hours. Remember, electric fans do not cool the air, but they do help sweat evaporate, which cools your body.
- Wear lightweight, light coloured clothing. Light colours will reflect away some of the sun's energy.
- Drink plenty of water regularly and often. Your body needs water to keep cool.
- Drink plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty.
- Water is the safest liquid to drink during heat emergencies. Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine in them. They can make you feel good briefly, but make the heat's effects on your body worse. This is especially true about beer, which dehydrates the body.
- Eat small meals and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein, which increases metabolic heat.
- Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.

Signals of Heat Emergencies

- **Heat exhaustion:** Cool, moist, pale, or flushed skin; heavy sweating, headache, nausea or vomiting, dizziness, and exhaustion. Body temperature will be near normal.
- **Heat stroke:** Hot, red skin, changes in consciousness, rapid, weak pulse, and rapid shallow breathing. Body temperature can be very high – as high as 105 degree F or 40.6 degrees C. If the person was sweating from heavy work or exercise, skin may be wet; otherwise, it will feel dry.

Treatment of Heat Emergencies

- **Heat cramps:** Get the person to a cooler place and have him or her rest in a comfortable position. Lightly stretch the affected muscle and replenish fluids. Give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not give liquids with alcohol or caffeine in them, as they can make conditions worse.
- **Heat exhaustion:** Get the person out of the heat and into a cooler place. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet clothes, such as towels or sheets. If the person is conscious, give cool water to drink. Make sure the person drinks slowly. Give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not give liquids that contain alcohol or caffeine. Let the victim rest in a comfortable position, and watch carefully for changes in his or her condition.
- **Heat stroke:** Heat stroke is a life-threatening situation. Help is needed fast. Call 911 or your local emergency number. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the body. Immerse victim in a cool bath, or wrap wet sheets around the body and fan it. Watch for signals of breathing problems. Keep the person lying down and continue to cool the body any way you can. If the victim refuses water or is vomiting or there are changes in the level of consciousness, do not give anything to eat or drink.