

AUTUMN 2025  
EDITION

# AGEING SAFELY... LATEST NEWS

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*Ageing Safely in the home of YOUR Choice – Ideas and Tips to maximize your Health and Wellness.*

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## WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN 2025 NEWSLETTER

This information bulletin provides tips to be considered for a safe and healthy Autumn.

### Ageing Safely in the Home of YOUR Choice

Ideas and Tips to Customize your Home  
into a Senior-Friendly Environment



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Summer has officially ended, yet October continues to provide us with the autumn colours and enjoyable mid-summer temperature. While enjoying the beautiful and delightful days, it is also a good time to prepare for cooler weather. To ensure a safe and healthy autumn, seniors should focus on preparing their home for colder weather, preventing falls, maintaining physical and mental health, and practicing safe driving.

### Preparing Your Home and Preventing Falls

Colder weather means using heating systems and spending more time indoors. Safety checks can prevent fires and protect against the cold.

**Inspect heating systems.** Schedule a professional to inspect and clean your furnace and chimney before the cold weather sets in. If using a space heater, keep it at least three feet away from flammable materials and turn it off when you leave or go to sleep. Today's technologies are equipped with timers for on and off options. **Also, never use an extension cord on a space heater.** It's also important to inspect fire extinguishers to ensure they are in working condition.

- **Check safety alarms.** Test and replace the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. This should be done twice a year, such as when you adjust clocks for daylight saving. Plan on doing frequent detector testing (every other month) of autumn and winter.

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- **Prepare for power outages.** Assemble an emergency kit in case of a storm. A basic emergency kit should include at least three days of water, non-perishable food, a first-aid kit, a flashlight with extra batteries, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, blankets, essential medication, personal hygiene items, and copies of important documents. Consider the unique needs of your household, such as pet supplies, baby formula, eyeglasses, to make the kit effective for everyone. Consider keeping large bottles of water (11.3 or 18.9 liters) to flush toilets.
- **Use caution with candles.** While they can be cozy, candles are a fire hazard. Never leave them unattended. Choose battery-operated flameless candles as a safer alternative.
- **Update Your Lighting**  
Remember that daylight saving time ends **Sunday, November 2, 2025, at 2:00 am**, and the days are getting shorter. Reliance on artificial light will be the focus for the next several months.
- **To be safe, check out the lighting in your home to make sure it is well-lit.**
  - (a) Install nightlights into hallways, bedrooms, bathrooms, and any other area that needs to be accessible after daylight dwindles. Using the type with a battery backup will provide light during power outages.
  - (b) Make sure that there is a clutter-free pathway to all wall light switches. Use 24-hour timers on lamps that turn on and off at the desired time to prevent walking into a dark room.
  - (c) Check the batteries in all stored flashlights and make sure that they are easy to get to in case of an emergency, such as bedside and in proximity to stairs.
  - (d) Stock up on candles (battery operated are safer), light bulbs and batteries. It is better for the environment to use chargeable batteries with the use of a home charger.
  - (e) The book **‘Ageing Safely in the Home of YOUR Choice’** contain hundreds of tips to identify and eliminate or mitigate tripping hazards present in most homes.
- **Clear Outdoor Walkways**  
Autumn leaves are beautiful but fallen wet autumn leaves are slippery and pose a fall risk. Keep all your outdoor walkways free

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of these. Hire someone to rake regularly and sweep the walkways. This is a good time to think about installing handrails and/or non-skid surfaces on your home's exterior stairs as well as motion sensor lights.

- **Dress Warmly and Wisely**

October/November is the time of the year to start transitioning summer clothing to the more appropriate fall and winter fashion. Layering is the game plan, especially for autumn. Pay special attention to proper footwear that are a correct fit for your foot's shape, provide adequate support and cushioning for your activities and body, with good traction which can help prevent slipping and falling. Utilize appropriate assistive devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, and canes equipped with a retractable ice pick to the tip for better traction and adopting a "penguin shuffle" walk to minimize the risk of slips and falls.

**Prioritize Health and Wellness**

Stay healthy. Wash your hands often or use a hand sanitizer. Health professionals say that handwashing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of disease.

- **Get your vaccinations.** Autumn, usually after thanksgiving, is the start of flu season. Get an annual flu shot, COVID-19, and any other vaccines recommended by your doctor to reduce your risk of seasonal illnesses.
- **Stay active.** Regular, gentle exercise like walking or Tai Chi improves strength, balance, and flexibility, which can help prevent falls. On bad weather days, try indoor activities like stretching or chair yoga. Check previous newsletters and blogs for links.
- **Dress in layers.** As mentioned, the weather can fluctuate, so wear layers to adjust your clothing and maintain a comfortable body temperature. Keeping warm is crucial to prevent hypothermia.
- **Keep warm.** As we move closer to colder months, drops in temperatures will undoubtedly occur. Seniors must protect themselves from the cold. Although autumn doesn't present the same bitter weather as winter, there's still a palpable risk. In fact,

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the Public Health Agency of Canada, reports that hypothermia can develop rather quickly after being exposed to relatively mild cold temperatures. Seniors should venture outside only when necessary. When you do, dress in layers of loose-fitting clothing.

- **Stay social.** Shorter days can lead to feelings of isolation. Stay connected with friends and family through phone calls, video chats, or organized indoor social activities. Initiate connections frequently with friends and family.
- **Monitor mental health.** Be aware of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Maximize exposure to natural daylight and speak with a doctor if you experience symptoms of fatigue.

### Fall Driving Hazards and Tips to Stay Safe

Kids, deer, bad weather — here's what you need to know before you hit the road this season

- **Autumn's arrival cues** — weather changes, shifting wildlife behaviour, shorter days, the start of school and falling leaves — can all impact cars and drivers. “The driving environment can change a fair bit when seasons change,”
- **The golden hour glare**
  - In autumn, the sun's daily path is different. The sun will not get as high in the sky, resulting in longer periods of glare each morning and evening, often coinciding with daily commutes.
  - The simplest aids in reducing glare should be familiar. Use your car's sun visor and wear polarized sunglasses. Avoid driving during sunrise and sunset, and/or choosing alternative routes that avoid direct east or west exposures.

**Learn safe driving strategies.** The following might be of interests:

- Council on Aging (<https://coaottawa.ca/smart-aging/smart-aging-workshops/>, Week 5 - Getting Where You Need to Go
- <https://citydriver.com/courses/winter-driving-package/>
- Due to differing chemical properties in their rubber formulas, “all season” tire traction diminishes in colder temperatures. It is recommended that driving “a bit smoother,” and trying to avoid abrupt movements or sudden turns, to make up for this change. Make sure that your tires are inflated to the air pressure suggested in your owner's manual — these numbers are often also printed on the inside of the driver's doorjamb.
- Check that your tires have plenty of tread. insert a quarter into the tire's shallowest tread groove with the caribou's head facing

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down. If the caribou's muzzle is visible above the tread, your tires have less than 6/32nds of an inch of tread depth and should be replaced for winter safety. If the muzzle is covered, your tires have sufficient depth for safe driving on winter roads. **For safer driving install genuine winter tires.**

- If rain, fog or frost appears, it is wise to remain at home. To prep for cooler weather emergencies, pack a supply kit in the trunk: “a portable phone charger, a charger cord, water, blankets and maybe a deck of cards.” You can even purchase all manner of road kits from CAA or local hardware stores, including those that contain supplies for emergencies (e.g., jumper cables and flashlights), first aid (e.g., bandages and gauze) or foul weather (e.g., gloves, hand warmers, shovel, candles, ice scraper) and non-perishable snacks, such as granola and protein bars.

**Keep Emergency Information Accessible**

Having easy access to emergency contacts and important medical information is vital. Consider carrying an ID with critical information or keeping it close at home. This could include medications you take, allergies, and contact numbers for family or healthcare providers.

**Support and help**

There's a lot to enjoy when it comes to autumn. To ensure that senior clients have the means to experience all the season has to offer, different organizations can support you in achieving small and medium projects to enhance your safety and well-being. Don't wait or procrastinate in securing the help you need, be it from a family member, a good friend or a specialized contractor.

You may already have a trusted person so give them a heads-up. If not, check with friends and family for reputable contractors. Various groups can also support you - <https://www.renoassistance.ca/en/residential> and <https://thetasketeers.ca>

**Senior living information is posted regularly on the blog.**

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**Autumn**