



## The Catholic Mutual Connection

### Watching Out for Winter Hazards

As we transition to the colder, wetter months, a new set of potential safety hazards emerges. Both the inside and outside of our facilities require a preseason check, as well as maintenance throughout the winter months. The following are a few of the high priority areas that should be addressed.

**Sprinkler Systems:** Regular maintenance of sprinkler systems is one of the most effective methods for preventing freeze damage. If snow is blocking access to any valves, hydrants, or other system components, clear it immediately. It's also important to ensure units are operating at the correct temperature rate.

**Water & Temperature Sensors:** These devices will alert you to the presence of water and/or temperature changes, and early detection reduces the chances of significant property damage. You should identify the areas throughout your property where these sensors will be most effective and determine if professional installation is required.

**Power Interruptions:** Power outages can occur at any point throughout the year but are of particular concern during the cold months. Our [CARES document](#) outlines important steps you can take to plan for a power disruption, as well as what to do once an outage occurs.

**Slips & Falls:** The most effective way to prevent slips, trips, and falls is to develop a written snow and ice removal protocol. Have an adequate supply of ice melt and sand, and make it easily accessible to walkways. Check snowblowers before the first snowflakes fly, and make sure shovels are accessible. The winter maintenance log in our [CARES document](#) can help ensure highly trafficked areas are kept safe for staff, volunteers, and visitors.

**Ice Dams:** Heat loss, snow cover, and outside temps can lead to a buildup of water and ice on the roof, potentially leading to ice dams and building damage. Ensure your building is properly insulated to maintain a consistent temperature, and hire a contractor to ensure the ceiling is airtight. A professional contractor should also be used to remove snow from the roof following a storm – not employees or volunteers.

**Freeze Damage:** A basic check of all major systems should be done now, before the deep freeze and heavy snow season hits. This includes inspecting insulation, pipes, heating systems, and following a regular maintenance and inspection program to winterize all properties.



## Safety Tip

### Daylight Savings Ends November 5



On Sunday, November 5 at 2 a.m., Daylight Savings Time officially ends. As we set our clocks to “fall back,” it’s also a convenient time to check the batteries in our smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Conducting these battery checks in conjunction with the time change ensures this maintenance is built into your schedule. Your smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries should be changed annually for optimal performance.

Note: If your smoke or carbon monoxide detectors are more than 10 years old, consider replacing them. Alarm sensors can wear down and become less effective over time.

## Space Heater Safety

Space heaters, while convenient, can be dangerous. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), space heaters contribute to approximately 25,000 residential fires each year.

If you must use space heaters, Catholic Mutual Group recommends taking the following safety precautions:

- Only purchase space heaters that have been tested and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from other objects, and make sure the heater is not used in an area where something could fall on top of it and start a fire.
- Electric space heaters must be plugged directly into a properly grounded outlet. NEVER use an extension cord with a space heater.



Our [CARES document](#) contains additional information on space heater safety. We recommend sharing these safety tips with all maintenance staff, employees, and volunteers to ensure proper space heater usage.

## Connect with CMG Connect!

We are constantly updating our online trainings on CMG Connect to ensure that CMG members have the information they need to minimize their risk exposure. Please don't forget to visit [CMG Connect](#) regularly for timely new content...and please don't hesitate to share it with others who would benefit from the information.

To view this newsletter on our website, please click [here](#).

For more helpful information, please visit the [Catholic Mutual Group newsletter archives](#).

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