

MAJOR TOPICS & OTHER ISSUES

JANUARY AWARENESS MONTH

Tips for Staying Warm

Exposure to cold can cause life-threatening health conditions. Avoid serious conditions such as frostbite and hypothermia, by keeping warm.

- Wear a hat, hood, or scarf, as most heat is lost through the head.
- Wear layers, as they provide better insulation and warmth.
- Keep fingertips, earlobes, and noses covered if you go outside.
- Keep clothing dry; if a layer becomes wet, remove it.

ONLINE SHOPPING TIPS FOR SAFETY

If you're still planning to shop online this holiday season, be smart about it, advises the Consumer Federation of America. Tip:

1. Make sure the browser is secure. If [http](#) or [https](#) appears at the beginning of the website URL, you know the site is protecting your account number. Never provide financial account numbers by e-mail because it's not secure.
2. Never pay using a money transfer service. Crooks ask consumers to send them payment using a money transfer service such as Western Union or MoneyGram because they can get the cash fast and it's hard to trace. Money transfer services should only be used to send money to people you have met in person and know well.
3. Pay by credit card. That gives you the right to dispute the charges if the goods

NYC water is some of the best in the nation. But lead can enter tap water through older household plumbing. Lead poisoning has dropped over the years. Here are a few precautions to further reduce your exposure: Run your tap for at least 30 seconds until the water is noticeably colder before using it for drinking, cooking or making baby formula any time the water in a faucet has stood for many hours. Always use cold tap water for drinking or cooking. You can register for Notify NYC on the WEB or call 311.

Department of Buildings offers Tips for Winterizing Your Home

1. Reduce drafts. Loose fitting windows and doors can be major sources of heat loss in a building. Properly seal them with weather-proofing materials. Adding weatherstripping around the edges of doors and windows will help keep heat in.
2. Check attic insulation. The majority of heat that escapes from a home is through the roof. Proper insulation of at least six inches will help prevent heat loss.
3. Maintain heating equipment. Properly maintain heating equipment to assure maximum efficiency and reduce the risk of malfunction. Have equipment cleaned and serviced yearly by a qualified individual to ensure safe use.
4. Clean your chimney. Have your chimney cleaned and checked once a year, preferably before heating season starts. If you have not had your chimney inspected within the last three years, you should have it checked to ensure that there are no blockages.
5. Protect water meters and pipes from freezing. Pipes and meters can freeze when in unheated areas. Ensure there is proper insulation in the surrounding areas. Turn off water to outside faucets, remove hoses and drain the pipes.
6. Employ proper precautions when thawing pipes and meters. If pipes and meters freeze, thaw them carefully. Do not use a flame, which could ignite a fire or cause a steam explosion. Open a faucet near the frozen area to release vapors from melting ice.
7. Prevent snow and water accumulation. Snow and rain that collect on roofs can cause a leak or compromise a building's structural integrity if the accumulated weight becomes too great. Remove snow from roofs and drains regularly. Clean gutters and roof drains to prevent clogs.
8. Check contractor qualifications. Make sure that individuals inspecting a boiler or chimney have the proper qualification from the Department of Buildings and Department of Consumer Affairs. Make sure your heating oil company has had its delivery truck inspected by the Department of Consumer Affairs to check for faulty meters.
9. Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Make sure that smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are working. Change the batteries of these devices twice a year – when you change your clocks for Daylight Saving Time.
10. Avoid fire hazards. Keep space heaters away from draperies, linens and all flammable materials. Do not let candles burn low, and do not place them near children.

Ice Safety Tips

(from [NYC Parks & Recreation](#)):

During the winter months, ponds and lakes in City parks may appear frozen, but venturing onto them is extremely dangerous and can cause potentially fatal accidents. To remind people of the dangers of thin ice, Parks & Recreation posts warning signs along the perimeter of city lakes and ponds in English and in Spanish. Special ladders are also installed around the edges of city lakes for trained personnel to use in case someone falls through the ice.

- Never go on frozen waters (unless clearly marked otherwise with official signs).
- Parents and caregivers should make sure children are never unattended near ice.
- If you hear cracking, lie down immediately to try to distribute your weight.
- If you witness someone falling through ice, never attempt to make a rescue by yourself. **Call 911** and notify the proper authorities. Be sure to give the exact location and an account of the incident. [Learn more about outdoor skating rinks in City parks](#)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HIGH SCHOOL ALTERNATIVES ADULT & CONTINUING EDUCATION

IF YOU ARE 21 OR UNDER, A NYC RESIDENT, AND ARE BEHIND IN CREDITS OR HAVE DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL, DON'T ASSUME THAT EARNING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR GED IS OUT OF REACH. DIAL 311 FOR ASSISTANCE!

