

Cold Weather Safety Tips For Seniors

(NAPSA)—For the 36 million seniors in America, cold weather can pose many dangers. Seniors, however, can take steps to avoid accidents and illnesses during this time.

“Winter-related accidents and illnesses account for a large number of all senior health-related insurance claims during winter,” said Scott Perry, president, Bankers Life and Casualty Company, an insurance company specializing in seniors. “But that doesn’t mean that seniors have to sit the season out. By taking a few precautions, seniors can enjoy winter safely and securely.”

Keeping warm—inside and out—is key to guarding against hypothermia or loss of body heat. Seniors, who are among those more susceptible to the condition, can reduce their risk outdoors by dressing warmly with loose-fitting, layered, lightweight clothing. Mittens are warmer than gloves, because fingers generate warmth when they touch each other. A hat is a must as 30 to 50 percent of body heat loss occurs through the head.

To stay warm indoors, the National Institute on Aging recommends the following tips:

- Close blinds and curtains to prevent heat loss from your home. Weather stripping or caulking around windows can keep cold air out.

- Keep your thermostat set to 68 to 70 degrees.

- Eat a well-balanced diet. What you eat is important to maintaining your health and keeping heat inside your body.

Commonsense measures can also help keep seniors safe.

- Make sure smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors work. CO is a potentially dangerous gas emitted by fuel-burning heaters



and appliances. Seniors’ bodies can’t eliminate CO as quickly as younger adults.

- Ask neighbors or relatives to help with snow shoveling. Shoveling takes more energy than many seniors think, as cold weather puts an added strain on the heart. If shoveling can’t be avoided, warm up your body with stretching exercises and take frequent breaks.

- Continue drinking at least six to eight glasses of liquid daily, especially in dry cold weather, to avoid dehydration. This can also help prevent dry-skin problems.

Snow and ice can be challenging, especially for seniors. These are among the steps you can take to stay firmly planted outside:

- Wear nonskid boots.

- Have salt or sand applied to icy areas outside.

- If you use a cane, replace the rubber tip before it is worn so it does not become slippery when wet.

- When traveling, make sure your car has been tuned up and has good tires. Also, keep your gas tank near full and always let family or friends know your travel plans, including routes and times.

For more tips for seniors, visit www.Bankers.com and click “Senior Resources.”