



For Immediate Release

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Winter Fall Prevention Tips from the National Safety Council, Greater Omaha Chapter

Omaha, Neb, - December 15, 2009 – Winter weather blew in with a vengeance to Omaha and surrounding areas over the past several days. Snow and ice not only make for bad driving conditions, but it increases the incidence of falls... especially among older adults. The following are important tips and reminders to help keep everyone safe from falls this winter season.

“Winter weather can be beautiful, and make it possible for us to participate in fun outdoor activities such as sledding and skiing. However, with winter conditions come safety hazards such as falling on the ice,” said Kay Farrell, president/CEO of the National Safety Council Greater Omaha Chapter. We encourage everyone to take a few minutes to review these important tips that will help keep you on your feet this winter season.”

Before venturing out in icy conditions:

- **Check your footwear.** Examine your shoes and boots. How's the traction? Is it time for a new pair? Better traction can help keep you more stable on icy surfaces.
- **Keep your shovel and salt in your house.** The reason you have a shovel and salt is so you don't have to walk on a slippery sidewalk. If you have to travel through the snow and ice to get to your garage where the salt and shovel are kept, that defeats the purpose.
- **Check the railings.** If you have railings leading up to your front door, check to see if they're sturdy. If you slipped, would they be able to support you?
- **Bring a cell phone when you leave the house.** If you fall, it can sometimes be hard to get up. Carrying a cell phone whenever you go out can bring peace of mind.
- **Slow down.** Allow extra time if it's slippery. It's when you hurry that you push the envelope of what your balance can handle. Also, keep in mind that being a little late is better than rushing and causing a fall.
- **Ask for help.** If you have to walk across an icy sidewalk or parking lot, try to find a steady arm to hold on to. Most people are happy to help an older person navigate a slippery walkway? You just have to ask.
- **Have a plan.** When you are going out, ask yourself, "If I slipped and fell here, what would I do?"
- **Strengthen your legs.** Strong leg muscles can help you steady yourself if you slip. And if you do fall, they make it a lot easier to get back up. You should exercise your legs

regularly to keep them strong. Try walking up and down your stairs repeatedly or do a set of ten squats out of a chair a couple times per week.

- These little things, when used together, can make the winter elements a little less daunting.

About the National Safety Council, Greater Omaha Chapter

Founded in 1924, the National Safety Council, Greater Omaha Chapter, is a private non-profit, community based organization that promotes safety and health by providing programs, resource services and education to individuals and organizations to prevent both the personal and economic loss associated with injuries, accidents and health hazards wherever they exist. Under the leadership of the National Safety Council, Greater Omaha Chapter, the greater Omaha metro area was recently designated a safe community by the United Nation's World Health Organization (WHO). For more information, visit www.safenebraska.org.