We have definitely had our share of snow and cold weather this year, but warmer days are coming. March brings us the official start to Spring, which falls on March 20 this year.

March also brings us St. Patrick’s Day, March Madness, and other events. This includes the start of Daylight Savings Time, which begins March 13. When you move your clocks ahead, you should also change the batteries in your smoke detectors. You’ll find more information about smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in this newsletter on page 2.

March is also National Ladder Safety Month, see page 3 for more information. We will also offer you some sobering statistics about St. Patrick’s Day, just in case you need more reasons not to drink and drive.

Lastly, we ask that you continue to think about your safety and the safety of others. Continue to keep social distancing, keep washing hands/using hand sanitizer, and keep wearing your masks/face coverings when needed. Continue to slow the spread. Stay safe and healthy.

From the Director of Safety

Staff,

March has finally arrived! Hopefully, this month will bring us better weather and further our way to a COVID 19 recovery.

This month’s newsletter focuses on the importance of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. It will also highlight some safety precautions you should consider while performing your spring cleanup. Be on the look out for our NSC Family Safety & Health Magazine Spring edition which will be disseminated throughout HH, the Pentagon and our Weekly Gouge.

R/s, Your Command Safety Office

Spring forward ....

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Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Three out of every five home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms, or no working smoke alarms, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Test your smoke detectors every month and replace the batteries at least once a year. Smoke alarms should be in every bedroom and in the common areas on each floor of the home. Large homes may need extra smoke alarms. Mount them at least 10 feet from the stove to reduce false alarms, less than 12 inches from the ceiling and away from windows, doors, and ducts.

Smoke alarms can be interconnected wirelessly. That means when one sounds, they all sound. A Consumer Product Safety Commission survey found that this is the best way to notify everyone in a home if there is a fire. Be sure to purchase smoke alarms that have a reputable testing agency on the label, such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL). Replace all smoke alarms in your home every ten years.

Anything that burns fuel can potentially become a source of carbon monoxide - an invisible odorless gas that can kill. CO alarms should be in a central location outside each bedroom and on every level of the home. The safety tips for CO detectors mirror those of smoke alarms: change the batteries once a year, test them and interconnect them (if possible). Also make sure vents for your gas appliances (fireplace, dryer, stove, furnace) are free of snow or debris and are not blocked by anything else.

A good way to remember to change the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors is to change them whenever you change the time on your clocks when daylight savings time begins or ends. Keep these tips in mind to keep your family and your home safe.

(NSC.org)
Ladder Safety

March is National Ladder Safety Month. Every year, thousands of people suffer disabling injuries and over 300 people die in ladder-related accidents, according to the CDC. One of the goals of National Ladder Safety Month is to decrease this number.

Ladder Safety should start before you even step foot on the ladder. Here are some tips to keep you safe:

- Inspect your ladder for cracks, loose rungs, splinters and sharp edges prior to every use. If the ladder appears to be in poor condition, do not use it.
- Use caution when moving or carrying ladders.
- Use team lifting if the ladder is too long or too heavy for one person to carry.
- Ladder should be carried horizontally, rather than vertically, unless it is lightweight or less than 8 feet long.
- Ensure ladders are set on firm ground and against a solid support while in use.
- When using a non-self-supporting ladder, which must lean against a wall or other support, be sure to position it at an angle so that the horizontal distance from the top support to the foot of the ladder is about 1/4 the working length of the ladder.
- **Always** completely open the step ladder and make sure it is stable before stepping on the ladder.
- Ensure to read and abide by the maximum intended load and manufacturer’s rated capacity when selecting and using ladders.
- **Never** stand higher than the second step from the top of the ladder.
- **Never** stand or sit on the top step of the ladder.
- If using an extension ladder, make sure it extends three feet past the top of the roof.
- **Always** maintain 3 points of contact with the ladder (2 hands and one foot or 2 feet and one hand).
- **Always** face the ladder while ascending or descending.
- **Never** use a metal ladder near electrical exposures.
- **Never** move a ladder while someone is on it, or try to reposition the ladder you are on.
- **Never** reach too high or too far from the ladder to ensure you don’t lose your balance.

(www.laddersafetymonth.com / www.travelers.com)
**Spring Cleaning Safety**

This year, the first day of Spring is March 20. Many people choose this time of year to start their yearly cleaning, so we will provide you with some Spring Cleaning Safety Tips.

- **Do not rush, even if you are tired or in a hurry.** You are much more likely to make a mistake that will jeopardize your safety if you are rushing. Take a break if you are exhausted, get some water, and start again when you are rested.

- **Be careful when moving large pieces of furniture and appliances.** Use proper lifting technique - keep your back straight and lift with your legs. Wear shoes when moving heavy items, to prevent injury to your toes. Do not move something if it is too heavy - it is not worth risking injury. Clean around the item or get someone to help move the item.

- **Be safe while on ladders and stepstools.** Use extreme caution while performing a task that involves being on a ladder. Keep 3 points of contact on the ladder. Do not lean too far to either side. You should wear non-skid shoes, and ensure that the rungs are not wet before you step on them. If possible, have someone hold the ladder steady for you.

- **Be careful when walking on wet surfaces.** Take precautions to keep from falling, it is very easy to slip on a wet floor. Make sure others in the house are warned of the wet floor, and keep children away, or make it so they cannot access the wet area.

- **Keep stairs, landings, and walkways clear of boxes, bags and clutter.** Spring cleaning is a great time to de-clutter your home, but make sure you do not cause a safety hazard while you are deciding what to get rid of. Place your boxes or bags out of walkways and away from stairs or steps.

- **Do not carry too much stuff at once, especially on stairs.** Always ensure you can see over the load you are carrying, whether you are on stairs or not. If on stairs, make sure you keep a hand free to hold onto the stair railing.

- **Always follow cleaning product label safety instructions and recommendations.** Cleaning supplies can create nasty fumes, so ensure you have fresh air - open a window or place a fan in the room. Also, do not mix ammonia and bleach (both common household products) - this will create toxic fumes.
  - **Wear a mask when cleaning dusty areas.** This is especially important if you are allergic to dust.
  - **Do not leave buckets filled with water around your home.** If you need a break, put the bucket in an inaccessible area - a child can drown in a very small amount of water.
  - **Put all cleaning supplies away when you are done.** Keep cleaning supplies in a childproof cabinet and put them away as soon as you are done using them.

(household-management-101.com)
St. Patrick’s Day Safety

Many people celebrate St. Patrick’s Day by partying. This can often involve drinking much more than you intended. Forty-one percent of Americans will spend St. Patrick’s Day at a bar or at a party. In fact, if you find yourself at one of these locations, it is important that you do not drink and drive.

Here are some not so fun statistics about St. Patrick’s Day:

- 63 percent of crashes on St. Patrick’s Day 2019 involved a drunk driver.
- 57 people were killed in drunk driving crashes in 2019.
- 3/4 of fatal drunk driving crashes involved a driver whose BAC was 2 times over the legal limit (>.16).
- 32 percent of the pedestrians killed in traffic crashes had a BAC of at least .08.
- $10,000 is the average cost of a DUI (including fees, fines, court costs, etc.).

Bottom line, if you plan to celebrate, be smart and plan ahead. Have a designated driver, use a rideshare (Uber, Lyft, etc.) or call a cab. Never get in a vehicle with someone who you feel is not safe to drive. Look out for each other and don’t become a statistic. (Statistics from NHTSA.)

March Madness

This year, March Madness selection begins on March 13th, and games start March 15th. The 68-team single elimination tournament holds 67 games over 21 days. This is a jam-packed end to the season, which properly earned it the nickname March Madness. The Final Four / National Championship will be held April 2 & 4, in New Orleans.

Regardless of your plans, whether you go to a local bar, host a party, attend a party, or just stay at home, please remember to drink responsibly and ensure you have a designated driver lined up. If plans change or the designated driver doesn't stay sober, you could also use a rideshare, such as Uber or Lyft, or call a cab.

COVID-19

COVID-19 still causes a concern for large gatherings - whether it be a party for St. Patrick’s Day, or March Madness or any other gathering. Be sure to follow DoD, state, and local COVID-19 guidance. Keep wearing masks/face coverings, washing your hands/using hand sanitizer, and remember to keep social distancing.

Rates may be dropping however, we have to stay vigilant!