



ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

Safety and Loss Control News

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Prepared by Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc.

Are You Ready for a Winter Storm?

Here's what you can do to prepare for this type of emergency:

Prepare a winter storm plan:

- Have extra blankets on hand.
- Ensure that each member of your household has a warm coat, gloves, or mittens, hat, and water-resistant boots.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit containing:
 - ◇ First aid kit and essential medications
 - ◇ Battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio and portable radio, flashlight, and extra batteries
 - ◇ Canned food and non-electric can opener
 - ◇ Bottled water
- Have your car winterized before the winter storm season.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit for your car (see list below).

Stay tuned for storm warnings:

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio and your local radio and TV stations for updated storm information.
- Know what winter storm WATCHES and WARNINGS mean:
 - ◇ A winter storm WATCH means a winter storm is possible in your area.
 - ◇ A winter storm WARNING means a winter storm is headed for your area.
 - ◇ A blizzard WARNING means strong winds, blind wind-driven snow, and dangerous wind chill are expected. Seek shelter immediately!

When a winter storm WATCH is issued:

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio, local radio and TV stations, or cable TV such as The Weather Channel for further updates.
- Be alert to changing weather conditions.
- Avoid unnecessary travel.

When a winter storm WARNING is issued:

- Stay indoors during the storm.

- If you must go outside, several layers of lightweight clothing will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat. Gloves (or mittens) and a hat will prevent loss of body heat. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs.
- Understand the hazards of wind chill, which combines the cooling effect of wind and cold temperatures on exposed skin. As the wind increases, heat is carried away from a person's body at an accelerated rate, driving down the body temperature.
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy sidewalks.
- After the storm, if you shovel snow, be extremely careful. It is physically strenuous work, so take frequent breaks. Avoid overexertion.

Avoid traveling by car in a storm, but if you must:

- Have emergency supplies in the trunk.
- Keep your car's gas tank full for emergency use and to keep the fuel line from freezing.
- Let someone know your destination, your route, and when you expect to arrive. If your car gets stuck along the way, help can be sent along your predetermined route.

If you do get stuck:

- Stay with your car. Do not try to walk to safety.
- Tie a brightly colored cloth (preferably red) to the antenna for rescuers to see.
- Start the car and use the heater for about 10 minutes every hour. Keep the exhaust pipe clear so fumes won't back up into the car.
- Leave the overhead light on when the engine is running so that you can be seen.
- As you sit, keep moving your arms and legs to keep blood circulating and to stay warm.
- Keep one window away from the blowing wind slightly open to let in air.

-Excerpted from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



Walk carefully on snowy, icy sidewalks.

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Homeless Shelters—Basic Guidelines When Opening Your Parish

While your parish may not sponsor a homeless shelter, your parish may open up its facilities in the event of inclement weather or a catastrophe. In opening up your facility, it is important to research the local ordinances around shelters, even temporary shelters. It is also important to work with Parish staff and volunteers as to the responsibility they have when working with the homeless.

During a recent five-year period, the cost of claims incurred by parish homeless shelters was approximately \$155,703.08. Two percent of the claims reported were due to auto accidents; 18 percent of claims reported were due to workers' compensation; 38 percent of claims were due to general liability; and another 38 percent were due to property damage.

Some of the specific claims reported included a homeless shelter employee bitten by a client's child; assault to homeless shelter volunteers and workers by clients; vandalism to facilities including fires set to carpeting and gym doors; injuries to homeless shelter employees and volunteers from lifting materials; and slips, trips and falls due to ice and uneven walking surfaces. Other claims included damage to homeless shelter facilities from burst pipes and severe weather.

To prevent similar claims from occurring at your Parish Homeless Shelter, consider the following guidelines.

Guests entering your facility should be treated with respect. However, they need to be informed of any ground rules the Parish may have, as well as the Parish staff and volunteers. Guidelines the Parish may develop and communicate to guests can include:

- Hours of operation
- Registration procedures
- Appropriate clothing
- No alcohol or drug usage or being under the influence upon entry
- No weapons
- No abusive threatening or profane language or actions
- No stealing or damage to another guest, volunteer or staff member
- No pets unless the pet is a service dog
- No disposal of personal belongings or human waste on the property

Many of the staff and volunteers within the Parish may not have worked with homeless guests. Here are some of the



Provide the guests with the dignity and respect that they do not receive during the day.

basics for working with homeless guests:

- Allow the homeless guests to own their successes and their failures.
- It is imperative to maintain order and discipline at all times.
- Encourage the homeless guests to make healthy and life-giving decisions without directing or leading them.
- Allow homeless guests to experience their feelings while assisting them in the appropriate ways to express those feelings.
- Show compassion. One need not have experienced the actual pain of a situation in order to understand what the individual is going through; trust your intuition.
- Allow the homeless guests to explore options and come up with solutions to their problems without feeling the need to fix their problems for them.

When staff of volunteers are interfacing with homeless guests, please remember TO:

- Smile, be positive.
- Be a good listener.
- Look everyone in the eyes and think of how to make each guest feel special.
- Have fun and enjoy the good in everyone.
- Visit with the guests during their time in the shelter; show hospitality.

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Homeless Shelters

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- Provide the guests with the dignity and respect that they do not receive during the day.
- Only provide access to predesignated areas.
- Review all emergency procedures with guests.

When staff or volunteers are interfacing with homeless guests, please remember to NOT:

- Give out your last name, address, telephone number, or other personal identification to the guests. If you have youth volunteers, remind them to NOT give out their school name or wear clothes with the school logo.
- Advise guests when the volunteer is next scheduled to work.
- Provide transportation for guests.
- Carry money with you to the site.
- Lend money to guests.
- Provide medication of any type (even aspirin).
- Take personal laundry home for guests.
- Clean up any bodily fluids, especially blood, unless you are wearing the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), and have been trained in bloodborne pathogens.
- Secure employment for guests.
- Allow the guests to attach themselves to the volunteer, creating differentiation.
- Ask probing or personal questions.
- Purchase items for or from guests.
- Socialize outside of the shelter environment.
- Contact a referral agency on behalf of a guest.
- Participate in promoting religious beliefs during site operation.

If youth volunteer with the homeless shelter, it is important for them to work side-by-side with adult staff or volunteers, and not be left alone with the guests. Adult staff or volunteers should be supervising the youth volunteers at all times. It is also important that signed parental approval by a parent or guardian be submitted to the Parish, prior to the youth volunteering in the shelter.

It is important for your parish to determine how your facility will be used for homeless guests. Ask yourself about what your Parish wants to do. Does your Parish wish to simply supply shelter or provide meals and laundry services as well? Either way, these are some basic steps for your Parish to utilize when developing a homeless shelter program, or simply opening up your facility during inclement weather.

Removing Snow Safely

Winter snow showers and storms make it necessary to clear walkways and parking lots to ensure that pedestrians and drivers are able to maneuver safely along these areas.

The following tips will help parish personnel to remove snow safely.



Snow Shoveling

If the area of snow to be cleared is small, or if a snow thrower is not available, someone will have to shovel it by hand. Only someone who is in good physical condition and general health should do this work.

First, the person shoveling should mentally divide the area into sections and clear one part, then the rest before going on to the next section. Whenever the snow begins to feel especially heavy, the shoveler should take a rest break. Persons shoveling snow should keep the following information in mind.

- Wet snow is much heavier than dry snow—govern the rate of shoveling accordingly.
- Push or sweep as much of the snow as possible.
- If an icy crust has formed on top of several inches of snow, shovel the snow in layers.
- Make use of small quantities of rock salt or other ice-melting materials to make the job as easy as possible.
- Dress warmly while shoveling snow because cold itself can pose a strain on the body's circulation. Don't bundle up so heavily however, that movement is difficult.
- Don't shovel snow right after eating or drinking alcohol, and don't smoke right before, during or after shoveling snow.
- If chest pain, weakness or other signs of physical stress occur, stop shoveling at once and seek medical attention.

Snow Throwers

All snow throwers are potentially dangerous. Their large, exposed mechanism, which is designed to dig into the

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If there are any subjects you would like to see addressed in this newsletter, or questions about a topic presented, please contact Ms. Amanda Weller, Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc., Two Pierce Place, Itasca, IL 60143, Telephone: 815-236-5170, Email: Amanda_Weller@gbtpa.com.

The information contained in this report was obtained from sources which to the best of the writer's knowledge are authentic and reliable. Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc. makes no guarantee of results, and assumes no liability in connection with either the information herein contained, or the safety suggestions herein made. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that every acceptable safety procedure is contained herein, or that abnormal or unusual circumstances may not warrant or require further or additional procedures.

Removing Snow Safely

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snow, is difficult to guard. However, with proper handling, snow throwers offer a service that is safer than the back breaking, heart-straining shoveling method. Safer snow throwers have guards on the drive chains, pulleys and belts.

The auger at the front of the snow thrower presents the greatest hazard. Some also have an additional auger for extra throwing power. These, along with moving gears, drive chains and belts can be sources of danger to anyone tampering with a snow thrower when it is running. Injuries usually occur when the operator attempts to clear off debris while the motor is running.

Although snow throwers can handle dry, powdered snow with little difficulty, their performance in wet, sticky snow is not as effective. Wet snow tends to clog the blades and vanes, and often jams and sticks in the chute. Snow throwers are also capable of picking up and even throwing ice, stones and other hard objects.

The following safety suggestions for snow thrower operations are recommended by the Outdoor Power

Equipment Institute. Protect yourself and others by following these safety tips:

- Read the Operator's Manual.
- Do not allow children to operate this machine, nor allow adults to operate it without proper instructions.
- Keep all persons a safe distance away.
- Disengage all clutches, and shift into neutral before starting the motor.
- Keep hands, feet, and clothing away from power-driven parts.
- Never place a hand inside the discharge chute or even near its outside edge with the engine running.
- Know the controls and how to stop the engine or how to take the unit out of gear quickly.
- Disengage power and stop the motor before cleaning the discharge, removing obstacles, making adjustments, or when leaving the operating position.
- Exercise caution to avoid slipping or falling, especially when operating the machine in reverse.
- Never direct discharge at bystanders, nor allow anyone in front of the machine—debris may be hidden in the snow.