

Department of Public Health

Safely Removing Snow

Here are some tips to remove snow safely:

- If you are inactive or have a history of heart trouble, talk to your doctor before taking on the task of shoveling snow.
- Protect your back from injury by lifting correctly. Correct lifting includes lifting with your knees and keeping the load close to your body. It is also important to avoid twisting motions when moving; instead reposition your feet to a better position before dumping snow.
- Drink plenty of water while engaging in this rigorous outdoor activity. Dehydration is a winter issue just like it is in the summer months.
- Take it slow! Shoveling can raise your heart rate and blood pressure dramatically. Be sure to stretch out and warm up before taking on the task.
- Use a shovel with a small blade and take small scoops, especially when shoveling wet snow.
- Whether shoveling or using a snow thrower, do so during the warmest part of the day.

Snow throwers can also be dangerous. It's important that residents take these precautions to avoid injury when using a snow thrower:

- Never wear scarves or other loose clothing that can become entangled in the snow thrower's moving parts.
- When moving the snow thrower, avoid awkward positions and twisting, as you can easily injure your back or slip on the icy pavement.
- NEVER place hands and feet inside the moving mechanical parts of the snow thrower while the engine is running, as the machine can seriously injure you.
- If the machine becomes clogged, turn it off and use the clearing tool to unclog it. NEVER use your hands or feet to remove the clog.
- For gas model engines, wait for the machine to cool before refueling.
- Do not run your gas-powered snow thrower in a closed area, like a garage or shed, as it releases carbon monoxide (CO) and can cause CO to build-up.

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