



It's okay to be a Boomer



how a workplace environment can easily become a toxic one.

It doesn't have to be this way. Whether a Boomer, Millennial, Gen X or Gen Z, everyone will benefit from health and safety efforts to reduce the frequency and severity of accidents and injuries at work and at home.

Recognizing the contributions Boomers have made and can still make to the workplace is the first step. Don't take his or her experience for granted. There is wisdom there that can be built upon to fit into today's work environment.

And Boomers, be aware that not everything was better "back in the day." It wasn't. Fact is, you are getting slower, harder of hearing, the eyesight is going and knees are getting worse. Recent studies have shown that there is a rise in the number of workplace accidents within the Boomer demographic. Complacency, apathy, and illness are all factors. Your workplace habits need to adjust to who you are now, not who you were then. This might mean getting used to new equipment, wearing updated PPE, or readjusting your work area by placing items you regularly use to minimize bending and reaching.

Boomers can learn a thing or two from their younger co-workers. After all, they were taught by the best. Right, Boomer?

"OK Boomer." This phrase has risen to such popular heights that countries as far away as the Netherlands and New Zealand have named it "Word of the Year" for 2019, and it was used as a \$400 question on Jeopardy.

Dictionary.com tells us OK Boomer is a slang phrase used, often in a humorous or ironic manner, to call out or dismiss out-of-touch or close-minded opinions associated with the baby boomer generation.

It's like when Boomers used to hear; "Back in my day we spoke when we were spoken to", or "Children should be seen and not heard", and Boomers responded with "Hey, hey, take a chill pill, daddy-o."

Boomers say they had the best music, the coolest festivals and, let's face it, they used a lot of hairspray. Many Boomers usually stayed in one job for most of their careers, and invested in retirement plans that actually came to fruition.

Later Boomers; however, are not enjoying this luxury and are having to face career changes in their 50s. They are being told that there simply is "no money" in the pension funds they have invested in. Couple that with having to work with young, up-and-coming "Gen Z" professionals who roll their eyes and say "OK Boomer" whenever a suggestion or a comment is made about how things used to work, and you can see

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What is light therapy and can it help you?

The seasonal blues often strike this time of year, as the cold weather and dark days combine to make us feel bored or depressed. Feeling better involves making time to exercise and trying to adopt a more positive mind set.

However, if you feel your winter blues go beyond feeling bored or depressed and you find you are having difficulty concentrating, becoming less sociable and feel continually stressed or anxious, speak with your health care professional to determine if you suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and if light therapy is the right option for you.

Light therapy is a way to treat SAD and certain other conditions by exposure to artificial light. During light therapy, you sit or work near a device called a light therapy box. The box gives off bright light that mimics natural outdoor light.

Light therapy is thought to affect brain chemicals linked to mood and sleep, easing SAD symptoms. Using a light therapy box may also help with other types of depression, sleep disorders and other conditions. Light therapy is also known as bright light therapy or phototherapy.

According to the University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine, how light therapy actually works is still not fully understood. There are now many light therapy devices available on the market making claims about light treatment, but these devices are not well regulated in Canada.

Therefore, UBC offers these recommendations based on the following:

- The light device should be tested and found effective in scientifically valid studies.
- The light device should have a filter that blocks harmful ultraviolet rays.
- The light device should be CSA approved for use in Canada.
- The light device company should have a track record of reliability.

UBC suggests fluorescent light boxes because they have been extensively tested with the greatest evidence for effectiveness in scientific studies. Other light devices, for example light emitting diode (LED) devices, light visors and dawn simulators, may be helpful for some but there is less evidence for effectiveness compared to light boxes.

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Top wellness tips to stay the course

(NC) The first couple of months of a new year are the most common time to set resolutions, but in a matter of weeks, many of us will have fallen off the wagon.

What tends to happen is that we set too many restrictions, rules and lofty ambitions for ourselves when it comes to eating and exercise. Instead we should consider adopting healthier habits that remain sustainable over time.

Here are a few tips:

Be realistic. Identify realistic goals and map out concrete, achievable steps you need to take to meet them.

Be accountable. Find a way to keep yourself accountable to your goal. Wellness apps can be a great way to track your progress and keep you focused on your goal.

Be social. Find a friend or community to give you support and inspiration. Integrate a coach into your life, start attending wellness meetings, connect with others on your program, and get your friends involved!

Be kind. Don't beat yourself up when you go off-course! Every new day (or your next meal) is the chance to get it right.

Have fun. Celebrate success and don't forget to treat yourself. By giving yourself permission to live a little and enjoy life, you're more likely to stick with your plans and see success.

Be patient. Change doesn't happen overnight, so learn healthy and sustainable habits to integrate into your life for the long run.

How to walk over icy patches

Encountering ice is almost an everyday occurrence during a Canadian winter, whether it is hidden under fresh snow, masking itself as black ice, or if it's right there in plain sight as you walk out your door.

Instead of winding up flat on your backside and possibly injuring yourself, the Canada Safety Council recommends these tips when you are walking and you encounter ice. Remember, body movements can increase your stability on an icy surface:

Slow down and think about your next move. Keeping your body as loose as possible, spread your feet to more than a foot apart to provide a base of support. This will help stabilize you as you walk. Keep your knees loose — let them bend a bit. This will keep your centre of gravity lower to the ground, which further stabilizes the body.

Now you are ready to take a step. Make the step small, placing your whole foot down at once. Then shift your weight very slowly to this foot and bring your other foot to meet it the same way. Keep a wide base of support. Maintain your centre of gravity over one leg at a time and take tiny steps, even if it looks like you are impersonating a penguin. Keep your hands out of your pockets.

Walking on a slippery floor can be just as dangerous as walking on ice. Keep these tips in mind when entering a building:

- Melting ice or water on the floor can make it slippery.
- Watch for floors and stairs that may be wet and slippery, walk carefully by outer doors.
- Use floor mats when entering a building to remove moisture from the soles of your shoes.



Don't ignore signs of possible heart troubles

Chest discomfort is linked to heart attacks. But what about signs of heart failure, valve problems, and irregular heartbeats? According to heartandstroke.ca it is estimated that about 600,000 Canadians are living with heart failure.

Congestive heart failure is on the rise as more people survive heart attacks and other acute heart conditions. As people with damaged hearts are living longer, they become more susceptible to heart failure.

Heart failure is a serious condition. There is no cure. However, with lifestyle changes and treatment options, you can manage your condition very well. Many patients can lead a full and normal life. Learning about your heart failure is an important first step in managing your condition.

When your heart doesn't pump well and congestion occurs, you may experience some of these symptoms. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider if any of the following occurs:

Fatigue

Fatigue can be caused by many illnesses and by medicines. But a constant, new fatigue also can sometimes signal heart failure (a condition in which the heart fails to pump well) or coronary artery disease.

Unexplained aches or pains

The blockage of the blood supply to the heart muscle that occurs with coronary

artery disease leads the heart to “cry out in pain” when it is asked to work harder. However, that pain is not always felt in the chest. Sometimes it is felt in the shoulders, arms, back, jaw, or abdomen. Particularly when pain in these locations occurs with exercise and disappears with rest, the pain could well be a sign of heart disease.

Shortness of breath

Don't be too quick to assume shortness of breath is just a matter of being out of shape. Unexplained shortness of breath that occurs with small amounts of activity could indicate heart trouble. If you climb up five flights of stairs for example, you could be short of breath, but if you go up 10 stairs and you're short of breath, that might be something different.

Heart palpitations

The term “palpitations” means a heartbeat that feels irregular or rapid. Most palpitations are harmless. They may be caused by anxiety, caffeine intake, or dehydration. But sometimes palpitations indicate a heart problem. It's important to note how your palpitations feel, how often they occur, and what you're doing when you experience them. For example, if you're resting — like watching television — and your heart suddenly starts beating irregularly or rapidly, bring that to your doctor's attention.

Keeping workplace mold in check

Mold is everywhere. It is a natural part of the environment and is necessary for the breakdown of leaves, wood and other plant debris.

The most common types of indoor mold are *Alternaria*, *Aspergillus*, *Cladosporium* and *Penicillium*. Mold generally is not hazardous to healthy individuals but there is potential risk to some people.

Those who have asthma, bronchitis, hay fever, other allergies, or have weakened immune systems, are more likely to react negatively. The most common symptoms are runny nose, eye irritation, skin rash, cough, congestion and aggravation of asthma.

Symptoms usually disappear after mold exposure stops. Most often, there are no known long-term consequences to workplace exposures.

If mold of any type is discovered in a workplace, it should be considered a potential health risk to employees and be removed as soon as possible.

All molds need water to grow. Mold can grow anywhere there is water damage, high humidity or dampness. Most often molds are confined to areas near the source of water. When moldy material becomes damaged or disturbed, mold spores can be released into the air. Exposure occurs if people inhale the spores.

Any building can have mold, but those with a history of water leaks, floods, fires and problems with humidity control and lack of fresh air should be considered at greater risk of mold growth.

Employees who suspect workplace exposure to mold is affecting their health are advised to immediately report all concerns to their supervisor, visit their doctor for proper diagnosis and treatment, and ask their doctor whether they should be medically restricted from the work environment.



The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety offers these mold prevention tips:

- Keeping the relative humidity between 30 and 50%.
- Venting showers and moisture-generating appliances, such as dryers, to the outside.
- Using exhaust fans when cooking, dishwashing or laundering or when cleaning large areas.
- Insulating cold surfaces to prevent condensation on piping, windows, exterior walls, roofs and floors where possible.
- Keeping HVAC drip pans clean, flowing properly, and unobstructed.
- Performing regularly scheduled building/HVAC inspections and maintenance, including filter changes.
- For floors and carpets, removing spots or stains immediately. Reduce the amount of water used when cleaning carpets as much as possible.
- Avoiding carpet installation around fountains, sinks, bathtubs/showers or directly on top of concrete floors that are prone to leaks or frequent condensation.

Know the risks of financial apps

(NC) Financial technology helps us to keep track of our finances, but it's important to know the risks related to new digital banking options.

Fintech refers to any kind of technological innovation used to support or provide financial services, such as online transactions through your tablet or smartphone. These innovations are bringing about major changes in the financial industry and giving rise to a range of new business models, applications, processes and products.

Although these apps can give you easy access to your personal finances, there are also some risks involved. For instance, your banking information — such as your debit or credit card number, username or personal identification number (PIN) — could be stolen.

That's why it's important to be very careful about sharing your personal and banking information online. In fact, did you know that by providing your banking or credit card information, you may risk violating your financial institution's user agreement?

This means that no matter what security features an app has in place, your financial institution may hold you responsible if your personal information is stolen and used without your knowledge or approval.

It's important to check your bank's user agreement before you share your personal, banking or credit card information, and check your financial institution's fraud protection policy to confirm who is responsible for any unauthorized transactions.

If you suspect that your information has been compromised, change your passwords immediately. Report any unauthorized transactions to your financial institution.

Wear gloves when it's cold

It's a known fact about the danger of texting and driving, but there are other ways texters risk their health especially during the cold winter months.

One of them is not bothering to wear gloves or mittens so that you can text and scroll with ease, often forgetting that you could be standing outside in -15 degree weather, with the windchill making it feel even colder. Fingers are one of the first body parts to feel the effects of the cold and damp and are frequently subjected to frostbite. Frostbite is a serious condition in which body tissues freeze.

Answering a few texts or scrolling once or twice in cold weather does not make you susceptible to frostbite; however, the decision not to protect your hands from the cold is the issue.

Using gloves or mittens is the best way to protect your hands. Consider these pointers when choosing gloves or mittens:

Just say no to cotton gloves.

Cotton absorbs water and loses all insulating ability once wet. Wearing a cotton glove is, quite simply, an invitation for cold hands. Eventually, a cotton glove starts to absorb a person's sweat—leading to a wet glove. And once wet, the glove loses all insulating ability. So, leave the cotton gardening gloves in the shed for spring and summer use.

Layers are critical.

The typical winter glove will have two layers. The outer layer made of nylon or leather, and an inner layer, insulated to hold in warmth.

Make sure they fit

It's important that your gloves or mittens fit you properly. Properly sized gloves or mitts provide greater dexterity, warmth and comfort. For the best performance, a proper fitting glove should fit snugly and allow enough room at the end of outstretched fingers for you to pinch about a quarter of an inch of fabric.



Presenteeism: Here but not all there

Although loss of productivity due to worker absenteeism costs businesses billions of dollars every year, those who are on the job but not functioning well can also hit the bottom line hard.

It's called presenteeism and research shows that workers showing up to work despite injury, illness, depression or other ailments is a common but often unaddressed issue.

Some of the reasons employees have for presenteeism include:

- Cannot afford to take the day off.
- No back-up plan for tasks they are responsible for.
- When they return to work, there will be even more to do.
- Committed to attending meetings or events.
- Concerned about job security related to downsizing or restructuring.

Presenteeism can have a negative impact on co-workers, as well. Not only might they catch a cold, the flu or some other contagious disease, they might feel pressured to pick up the slack for underperforming colleagues, thus adding to their own stress level. When this becomes a pattern, it can breed resentment and lower morale if unchecked.

Continuing to work through illness can lead to exhaustion or more serious health problems. While turning up for work might allow a person to accomplish tasks in the short run, it often leads to less productivity at work over a longer period of time.

Certain types of presenteeism increase risk of workplace injury. Working while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, being overtired or having an illness that affects mental function can be dangerous. Any of these can inhibit judgement and decrease reaction time.

No matter the reason, there is an onus on employers to take positive action to reduce or even eliminate presenteeism.

The ways managers handle employee workloads, and how they communicate and provide support, play a big role in the amount of work-related stress people experience. Thus, it is crucial that managers be aware of organizational causes of work-related stress and ill health and have the skills to promote positive working practices and well-being.

Efforts to raise awareness of common mental and physical health issues can help reduce stigma and provide people with a better understanding of workplace well-being.

One of the best ways to deal with presenteeism is to take time off work to recover. However, it is important to remember that sick days are not holidays and should be taken only when there is a genuine need to do so.

Rest and relaxation are important, but it might be necessary to visit a doctor or seek counselling if symptoms are serious enough.

Exercise and a healthy diet can help prevent certain illnesses and help recovery time. Getting the proper amount of sleep will help keep you sharp mentally and will improve your mood.



Why exercising in winter is so important

(NC) When it gets cold outside, our natural instinct is to stay indoors, but physical activity is a great way to keep off the weight gain that comes naturally at this time of year and banish the blues that can come with the shorter days.

Our bodies are designed to cope with the cold of winter by staying inside and packing on the calories to keep ourselves warm. Couple that with any recent holiday over-indulgences and you have a recipe for weight gain that's hard to get rid of come spring.

Fortunately, staying active helps regulate the amount of calories that you take in during the winter and has the added benefit of boosting your mental health by fighting off the winter blahs. Going outside also exposes our bodies to the sun for some much-needed vitamin D.

Another advantage comes from the cold-and-flu fighting benefits that exercise offers. Studies have shown that regular exercise boosts our immune systems, helping our bodies fight off any germs we're exposed to at this time of year.

However, it is important to pace ourselves. Don't try to do too much, too quickly and wind up getting hurt. Here are a few suggestions for easing into exercise during the winter:

Walking

Walking is by far the most popular low-impact exercise. It works the cardiovascular system and burns calories. To get your heart rate up, walk faster than a stroll. Picking up the pace can increase the intensity of your workouts. Add short bursts of speed or walk up an occasional steep hill. Make sure you dress appropriately for the weather conditions. Or if you don't want to walk outside in cold, dark weather visit the local shopping mall and walk a few laps.

Swimming

Swimming works the whole body. It's a great way to tone up and get trim. Swimming a few lengths involves most of the muscle groups, and you'll get a good aerobic workout if you increase the pace. Swimming can also help you lose weight if you swim at a steady and continuous pace throughout your session.

Nordic walking

Nordic walking is a full-body exercise that's easy on the joints and suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Classes range from gentle walks for people with health concerns to workout walks, which are a great way to improve fitness, lose weight and tone the whole body. It's a suitable activity for people with joint conditions or those who may be carrying some extra body weight.

A few ideas to deal with cabin fever

(NC) Even if you're with friends or family, being stuck indoors for extended periods of time can test the best of us. Whether it's because of a snowstorm or frostbite-inducing temperatures, here are some fun things you can do when cabin fever strikes:

Take a trip down memory lane.

Dig up old movies and try to get the VCR player working again or look through family photo albums to remember good times gone by. You can also use this time to clean up and organize photos on your laptop or phone, and finally narrow down which ones you want to print and frame.

Plan an exciting vacation.

Escape in your mind by planning your next trip. Think about where you've always wanted to go, and do some research on exciting things to see and do there. You can even plan a big group trip with friends or family, like a reunion or bachelorette party.

Embrace your inner polar bear.

Sometimes the best thing you can do is go with the flow. So, bundle up and head outside to explore nature. Go for a hike, ice-skate at a local rink or build a snow fort. Even if it's too cold to be out long, a quick walk around the block can do wonders for clearing your head.

Try one of the three Cs.

When all else fails, you can do one of the three Cs - cooking, crafting and cleaning. Try a complicated new recipe you'd never make on a busy night or weekend; get creative and make something with your hands like an art project or knit a sweater; or get a head start on your spring cleaning and declutter your home.

Health benefits of cold weather

Cold weather in Canada is pretty much par for the course. In many parts of the country winter lasts from November to April – or seems like it anyways. So here is some good-to-know news, cold weather does in fact have health benefits.

According to studies and research conducted recently, the cold weather helps in many areas including the following:

It helps fight diabetes

Exposure to mild cold weather can help diabetic people by activating their “brown fat”—tissue used to produce heat. This, in turn, helps absorb excess glucose in the blood according to research conducted at the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Sherbrooke in Quebec. A recent study from the University of Toronto showed that pregnant women exposed to cold outdoor air temperatures were less likely to develop gestational diabetes than those in warmer climates.

Cold weather boosts your brain

Colder temperatures can help you think more clearly. A 2017 study from Stanford University found that people perform some cognitive tasks, such as making decisions and staying calm, with more control when the thermostat drops—essentially, they become less impulsive. Research has also shown that people are less inclined to tackle complex tasks in the summer than in the winter—and for good reason. The brain requires glucose to function, but the body uses more of it when it's warm in order to keep its temperature down, leaving less fuel for reasoning and recall.

We sleep better when it's cold

Your body's core temperature drops when you're trying to sleep. This process can take up to two hours in the summer, but it's much faster in winter. Plus, with darker mornings, you naturally sleep later.



Energy boosts to round the last corner of winter

Believe it or not, the days are actually starting to get longer. It may not seem like it when you crack open the curtains and see it's still dark. But we are heading into the final stretch of winter's short days and long nights.

If you are still battling with the feeling of winter wipe out, try these tips for boosting your energy levels during the big chill.

Regulate your sleeping pattern

That's right, avoid the couch napping. Oversleeping during winter can make you feel sluggish in the mornings. Improve your bedtime habits by going to bed and waking up at roughly the same time every day, and aim for eight, undisturbed hours of sleep per night. Make your bedroom an inviting place to sleep, try to avoid screens of all kinds at least 30 minutes before you hit the hay, and cut down on caffeine in the evenings.

Eat for the weather

Instead of reaching for a cup of coffee, try to naturally boost your energy with

nutritious foods. Avoid gorging on sugary treats for a pick-me-up too; you'll feel great initially, but they'll give you a short-lived high that ends in a crash. Eating oats in the morning, for example, will top up your B vitamins, which help convert your food into energy, and will provide a source of slow-release carbs, so you'll feel fuller for longer. A portion of lunchtime salmon can provide anti-inflammatory omega-3 to keep the brain alert.

Get out into the daylight

Even if it does look a little dark and dreary, there is still more daylight outside than there is inside. Open your blinds during the daytime and try to get out and about into natural light as much as possible. Even just taking a brisk lunchtime walk can boost energy, reduce blood pressure and lift mood.

If however, these winter days are bringing you so down that your daily activities are disrupted, or you are suffering from feelings of depression or extreme listlessness, talk with your doctor.

Fireplace safety tips



There is comfort in the crackling sound of a wood-burning fireplace or stove on a cold winter's night. If your wood burning units are properly installed and maintained, your home will always have that warm and cozy feel.

Here are a few tips from the Canada Safety Council to keep your cozy home from becoming a fiery inferno:

Preparation:

When installing a wood stove, situate it on a non-combustible surface such as a tile floor. Adequate ventilation is very important for preventing carbon monoxide poisoning; make sure that a door or window is easily accessible from your wood-burning area.

Consult a professional about proper installation of stove pipes. If you are using a fireplace, regularly have the chimney cleaned and serviced by a professional. Keep an area of at least one metre around the stove or fireplace clear of anything that might catch fire or overheat.

When you light up:

Before lighting your fireplace or wood stove, open the damper to allow for good airflow. Keep the damper open until the

fire is out and the ashes are cool enough to touch.

Build your fire with a small amount of dry, seasoned wood to keep the flames under control. Resist the temptation to overload your fireplace or stove. Burning too much wood at once can cause tar and creosote to build up in your chimney or stove pipes, which creates a fire hazard.

Never use highly flammable materials such as wrapping paper or gasoline in a woodstove or fireplace. These substances can create dangerous fireballs in an instant.

Always use a screen in front of the fireplace, and never leave children unattended by a fire. Have a fire escape plan for your house and regularly review it with your family.

Good to remember:

Keep a working fire extinguisher in an accessible location. Check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors regularly and replace the batteries as necessary.

When it's time to clean the ashes out of the fireplace or woodstove, wait until they are completely cool and scoop them into a metal bucket; never place the ashes in a plastic or cardboard container.

Give food pairings a try

NC - Many of us make sure what we are wearing matches, but did you know that matching or pairing foods is also a good idea? According to Dietitians of Canada, you can easily maximize the nutrition and health benefits of delicious foods simply by pairing them in certain combinations.

Here are a few foodie power couples:

Bean burger and orange juice. Tap into the alternative meat products trend with a burger made of beans, a fantastic source of soluble fibre that can help lower blood cholesterol and control your blood sugar levels. To boost the iron absorption from beans and other plant-based foods, pair them with foods containing vitamin C.

Bananas and yogurt. You've probably heard of prebiotics and probiotics. Prebiotics are found in certain foods like bananas, asparagus and onions. Probiotics are healthy bacteria that naturally live in our digestive systems and are commonly found in foods like milk and yogurt. Prebiotics actually act as food for probiotics, so eating bananas and yogurt together is a winning combo for a healthy gut.

Spinach and nuts. Spinach is one of the best sources of lutein, a plant compound that can help keep your eyes healthy. If you enjoy a spinach salad, toss in a handful of nuts like peanuts, almonds or walnuts. The healthy fats found in nuts increase our body's absorption of lutein. Kale is another good alternative for the spinach.

Eggs and cheese. Eggs are one of the few foods that naturally contain vitamin D, which greatly improves our absorption of calcium, a bone-building nutrient found in foods like cheese. So go ahead and combine the two in a cheesy omelette or make scrambled eggs topped with grated cheese.

Be wary of wildlife hiding in your vehicle

Today's safety meeting is about keeping a lookout for wildlife hiding in your vehicle.



When we talk about safe winter driving, we generally cover such points as good tires, proper maintenance, to slow down, and to not drive if there is a blizzard raging.

One area we don't cover that often is the very real hazard of animals nesting in your wheel wells or under your car hood to protect themselves from the cold wind and freezing temperatures. The risk of this happening is quite high, especially in cold climates and for those working in remote forested areas. Here are a few examples that made the news recently:

- A car mechanic in Moncton reported he has seen hamsters, garter snakes, squirrels, chipmunks and mice stuck in the engine of cars. Recently a customer who had taken a demo truck out as a loaner popped the hood to put in some windshield wash and found an orange tabby cat tucked in

among the heater hoses staring right back at him. The cat had travelled more than 80 km wedged up in the engine of the demo truck.

- CBC News reported recently about a couple who popped the hood of their car after they detected a burning smell, and discovered their engine full of walnuts neatly packed in grass, presumably stored there by squirrels.
- A family in Calgary discovered a marmot living in their vehicle. Fish and wildlife officials advised him to get a trap and lure the animal in but before he could do that, the beast made a dash down the street and hopped straight into a neighbour's vehicle, right into the same place it was hiding before, under the hood of an SUV.

After you drive your car or truck and park it, the engine is going to remain warm for some time and that's just what animals are looking for.

Aside from the shock of finding animals living in your vehicle, they can cause giant headaches. Critters of all sorts can find their way into your engine compartment, dashboard, tail pipe or undercarriage and quickly get cozy, chewing up wiring, insulation, hoses and upholstery to build their nests. Chewed up wiring can cause a vehicle to catch fire.

To check that there are no stowaways, consider banging loudly on the vehicle's hood before starting the engine to give any critters a chance to escape. You

might also try honking the horn before driving away, just to be sure no creatures are hiding in or around the vehicle's chassis.

However, it isn't only the winter months that vehicles are an attraction to wildlife. Here are a few suggestions to consider to make sure critters don't keep cashing in on a free ride:

- Clean your garage from anything that may attract hiding spots and nest building for critters. Return the garage to its intended use – a place to protect your vehicle. Keep the doors shut. You might want to keep your car hood open if your vehicle is parked in a locked garage. This might deter animals from settling into the engine area.
- Clean your vehicle regularly, especially if you spend a lot of time in your vehicle as part of your job and you tend to snack. While eating or drinking in your vehicle is discouraged, especially when you are driving, those cracker bits you dropped into your lap and brushed off onto the seat or floorboard can be a tasty meal for a mouse or raccoon. Vacuum your vehicle regularly and keep your windows shut even while parked in the garage, or stopped at a remote worksite.
- If you've got a car that you don't plan to drive for a while, you might want to seal your tailpipe with masking tape and check it regularly. If you see a disturbance, it might be time to call your local exterminator.

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- To check that there are no stowaways, consider banging loudly on the vehicle's hood before starting the engine to give any critters a chance to escape. You might also try honking the horn before driving away, just to be sure no creatures are hiding in or around the vehicle's chassis.



However, it isn't only the winter months that vehicles are an attraction to wildlife.

Here are a few suggestions to consider to make sure critters don't keep cashing in on a free ride:

- Clean your garage from anything that may attract hiding spots and nest building for critters. Return the garage to its intended use – a place to protect your vehicle. Keep the doors shut. You might want to keep your car hood open if your vehicle is parked in a locked garage. This might deter animals from settling into the engine area.
- Clean your vehicle regularly, especially if you spend a lot of time in your vehicle as part of your job and you tend to snack. While eating or drinking in your vehicle is discouraged, especially when you are driving, those cracker bits you dropped into your lap and brushed off onto the seat or floorboard can be a tasty meal for a mouse or raccoon. Vacuum your vehicle regularly and keep your windows shut even while parked in the garage, or stopped at a remote worksite.
- If you've got a car that you don't plan to drive for a while, you might want to seal your tailpipe with masking tape and check it regularly. If you see a disturbance, it might be time to call your local exterminator.

1 To check to see if you have an animal hiding somewhere on or in your vehicle you can:

- A. Bang the hood loudly.
- B. Honk the horn.
- C. All of the above.

2 Chewed up wiring can cause a vehicle to catch fire.

True False

3 Hamsters, garter snakes, squirrels, chipmunks and mice are among the critters that have been found hiding in vehicle engines or wheel wells.

True False

4 Animals can easily climb into a vehicle's engine to find a warm place out of the winter cold.

True False

5 To stop critters from making your vehicle their home you should:

- A. Clean your car regularly.
- B. Charge rent.
- C. None of the above.

6 You should keep your vehicle's windows closed, even if you are parked in a garage or remote area.

True False

ANSWERS: 1.C 2. True 3. True 4. True 5. A 6.True

Date of Meeting: _____

Topic: _____

Location: _____

Department: _____

Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____

Meeting Leader: _____

Have meeting attendees sign this sheet:

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