

# SNOW REMOVAL TIPS

## Your Options:

### **Family, Friends and Neighbours**

In preparation for the first snowfall of the season, consider talking to your family, friends and neighbours. Ask them if they would be able and willing to help you out throughout the season. If they are unable, ask them to recommend someone else.

### **Community Contacts**

Consider contacting your local high school counsellor's office to find out if they have a student job/volunteer board and ask if you can post a notice. If you attend a place of worship, you may consider asking if they have any volunteers or members who are willing to assist with snow removal duties.

### **Contractors**

There are a number of contractors in Mississauga who can be commissioned at the beginning of the year to come to your home following a snow fall. Check the Yellow Pages <http://www.yellowpages.ca> under "Snow Removal" or "Snow Plowing" or contact the Better Business Bureau (see below) for reliability reports or a listing of their members.

## Snow Shoveling Safety Tips

Safe snow shoveling requires proper **preparation**, the right **tools**, good **technique** and **knowledge**.

### **Preparation**

- talk to your doctor about this activity and your health status before the winter season arrives
- think twice if you:
  - have had a heart attack or have other forms of heart disease
  - have high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels
  - are a smoker
- consider hiring a student or using a volunteer service if you are a senior
- wait at least 1-2 hours after eating and avoid caffeine and nicotine
- warm up first (walk or march in place for several minutes before beginning)
- start slow and continue at a slow pace (suggestion: shovel for 5-7 minutes and rest 2-3 minutes)
- drink lots of water to prevent dehydration
- shovel early and often:
  - new snow is lighter than packed/partially melted snow
  - take frequent breaks

### **Tools**

Shovel:

- sturdy yet lightweight is best (a small plastic blade is better than a large metal blade)
- an ergonomically correct model (curved handle) will help prevent injury and fatigue
- spray the blade with a silicone-based lubricant (snow does not stick and slides off)

**Clothing:**

- wear multiple layers and cover as much skin as possible
- wear a hat and scarf (make sure neither block your vision)
- wear mittens (tend to be warmer than gloves)
- wear boots with non-skid/no-slip rubber soles

**Technique:**

- always try to push snow rather than lifting it
- protect your back by lifting properly and safely:
  - stand with feet at hip width for balance
  - hold the shovel close to your body
  - space hands apart to increase leverage
  - bend your knees, not your back
  - tighten your stomach muscles while lifting
  - avoid twisting while lifting
  - walk to dump snow rather than throwing it
- when snow is deep, shovel small amounts (1-2 inches) at a time
- if the ground is icy or slippery, spread salt, sand or kitty litter to create better foot traction

**Knowledge:**

- shoveling snow is a strenuous activity that is very stressful on the heart
- exhaustion makes you more susceptible to frostbite, injury and hypothermia
- stop shoveling and call 911 if you have:
  - discomfort or heaviness in the chest, arms or neck
  - unusual or prolonged shortness of breath
  - a dizzy or faint feeling
  - excessive sweating or nausea and vomiting

*Snow Shoveling Tips Provided Courtesy of: Toronto Emergency Medical Services (EMS)*

**Hiring a Snow Removal Contractor**

- Ask for references and check them out.
- Get several estimates and ask the contractor about additional charges and price options.
- Make sure you know what services you are getting - find out exactly what is included in the estimate.
- Do not settle an agreement over the telephone - a face to face meeting where the contractor provides you with a written agreement is important.
- Always get a receipt.
- Make sure your expectations are realistic - keep in mind that a snowstorm makes travelling difficult.
- Remember the 10-day cooling off period - under the Consumer Protection Act, all contracts for goods or services signed in a consumer's home that are for more than \$50 are subject to this grace period for cancellation.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau for reliability reports or a listing of their members.

Better Business Bureau - Serving Mississauga

Phone 1-800-459-8875

e-mail: [info@mwco.bbb.org](mailto:info@mwco.bbb.org)

<http://mwco.bbb.org>