

SPRING AND SUMMER SAFETY ALERTS

To keep you safe, Colchester residents are reminded of the following conditions.

Scooters, bikes, in-line skates and skateboards are associated injuries annually

- Wear a comfortable, properly fitted helmet bearing the label of an independent testing laboratory. Be sure that the helmet sits level on top of the head- not rocking in any direction and always fasten the safety strap.
- Be sure the safety gear (wrist, elbow and kneepads) fit properly and does not interfere with the rider's movement, vision and hearing. Wrist pads are not recommended for scooter riders as they may affect their ability to maneuver.
- Wear reflective clothing after dark and during conditions that affect visibility
- Ride scooters only on smooth, paved surfaces.
- Learn and use proper hand signals when you turn and stop.
- Come to a complete stop before entering driveways, pathways or sidewalks, then look left, right and left again for bikes, cars or pedestrians heading your way.
- Teach crossing safety to children by example.

Barbecue Safety

Beware when you barbecue, in 2005 alone there were 8,300 home fires involving grills, hibachis or barbecues, including 3,400 structures and 4,900 outside fires. These 8,300 fires caused 10 civilian deaths, 110 reported injuries and \$137 million in direct property damage.

- When using barbecue grills always be sure to leave sufficient space from siding and eaves
- Connecticut law prohibits any grill to be utilized on balconies of an apartment, townhouse, or condominium.
- Always supervise a barbecue grill when in use.
- Keep children and pets far away when in use.
- With charcoal grills, only use starter fluids designed for barbecue grills and do not add fluid after coals are lit.
- With gas grills, be sure the hose connection is tight and check hoses carefully for leaks.
- Apply soapy water to the hoses and connections to detect leaks.
- Never turn on the fuel gas until you're ready to ignite the grill.

- Leave grill cover open when igniting and if grill does not ignite within seconds, shut off gas and allow grill to ventilate before retrying.
- Spare propane cylinders should never be stored indoors, under or near operating grills.
- Remove propane cylinders from grills before storing grills indoors for the season.
- Only store propane cylinders out of doors.

Water Safety

Extra caution should be used when around water, especially with children

- Only swim in designated swimming areas
- Always supervise children near water at all times and make sure children learn how to swim.
- Check the depth of the water before jumping in
- Always wear Coast Guard approved PFD's (personal floatation device) when boating, tubing or water sports, Air-filled swimming aids, like water wings or inner tubes are not substitutes for approved PFD's. An adult should always supervise children using these devices.
- Frequently check electrical wiring, Ground Fault Interrupters, appliances and devices associated with swimming pools and Jacuzzis.
- Be sure to extinguish all smoking materials and shut down motors and heating devices before fueling a boat.
- In case of a fuel spill, wipe up fuel immediately and check for fuel leakage and odor. After refueling and before starting the boat's motor, ventilate with the blower for at least 10 minutes.
- Always have a proper size and type UL/Coast Guard approved fire extinguisher handy.

Fireworks

Fireworks lead to thousands of injuries requiring emergency room treatment, according to NFPA.

These dazzling, but dangerous devices can burn up to 1200F and can cause serious burns, lacerations, amputations, and blindness, Stay safe by always leaving fireworks to professionals

- Stay back at least 500 feet from professional fireworks displays
- Treat all fireworks, whether legal or illegal for consumers, as suitable only for use by trained professionals.
- If you find fireworks, do not touch them, but instead direct them to authorities.
- Leave any area where amateurs are using fireworks.

Cleaning for Safety

- Nature is undergoing a fresh start and so are homeowners who are ready to clean up the debris that has been accumulating in basements, garages, and storage sheds over the winter.
- Household and pool chemicals, paints, and poisons should be properly marked and stored under lock and key, away from children's reach. Properly dispose of any that are leaking, expired or look bad.
- Make sure gasoline and cleaning fluids are well marked and stored in a cool, dry place away from the home and out of the reach of children and pets.
- Use only approved containers for gasoline, kerosene and diesel storage.

Yard Work Safety

- Always wear protective clothing when you handle pesticides and fertilizers, follow the manufacturers recommendations.
- More than 210,000 people are treated in emergency rooms each year for lawn mower related injuries, 16,200 are under the age of 19.
- Rake before you mow to prevent any stones and loose debris from launching into the air.
- Make sure that all safety devices are operational on all gasoline powered yard maintenance equipment.
- NEVER refuel equipment when the engine is HOT, and don't smoke while refueling.
- Never operate a lawn mower in your bare feet, wear proper footwear.
- Never start a lawn mower indoors or leave running gasoline powered yard equipment unattended.
- Use proper protective clothing and equipment when using chainsaws.
- Check all electrically powered tools for proper operation
- At least 55,000 people are injured or maimed each year from trimmers, lawn edgers and chainsaws.
- Always wait for the chain saw blade to stop before pulling away from a cut to avoid "kickback"
- Before you do any "hands on" weed removal, be sure you know how to identify poison ivy, sumac, oak and similar toxic plants.
- Cloth gloves will not protect you from such plants if they soak through. Try using rubber gloves under cloth gloves.

Weather related concerns

Facts about Thunderstorms

- They may occur singly, in clusters, or in lines.

- Some of the most severe occur when a single thunderstorm affect one location for an extended time.
- Warm, humid conditions are highly favorable for thunderstorm development.
- About 10% of thunderstorms are classified as severe- one that produces hail at least three-quarters of an inch in diameter, has winds of 58 mph, or produces a tornado.

Facts about lightening

- Lightning's unpredictability increases the risk to individuals and property.
- Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur miles away from any rainfall.
- "Heat lightning" is actually lightning from a thunderstorm too far away for thunder to be heard. However, the storm may be moving in your direction.
- Most lightning deaths and injuries occur when people are caught outdoors in he afternoon and evening.
- Your chances of being struck by lightning are estimated to be 1 in 600,00, but could be reduced even further by the following safety precautions.

What to do during a thunderstorm

If you are:

In a wooded area- Seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small tress.

In an open area- Go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flash flooding.

On Open water- Get to land and find shelter immediately, if no land stay as low as possible in the boat.

Anytime you feel your hair stand on end or tingling of the body, be *prepared for a lightning strike.*

Squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees.

Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground

DO NOT lie flat on the ground.

Tornadoes

Tornadoes are one of nature's most violent storms. In an average year, about 1,000 tornadoes are reported across the United States, resulting in hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries.

- In a home or building, move to a pre-designated shelter, such as a basement.

- If an underground shelter is not available, move to a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor and get under a sturdy piece of furniture. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside.
- Get out of automobiles.
- Do not try to out run a tornado in your car; instead, leave it immediately for safe shelter.
- If caught outside or in a vehicle, lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands.
- Be aware of flying debris, which causes most fatalities and injuries.
- Mobile homes, even tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes. You should leave a mobile home and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy nearby building or a storm shelter.

Severe Weather Alerts: “Watch and Listen” Have a battery-powered radio and flashlight handy

Monitor the Weather for changing conditions that could become threatening, be prepared to take shelter, secure outdoor items that can move around and cause injury/death, expect power outages.

Monitor radio and TV for severe weather updates

A Watch means- Conditions are favorable for severe weather.

A Warning means- Approaching, tornado, hurricane, severe thunderstorm or even a blizzard. Take shelter immediately.

References:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov>

<http://www.weather.gov/os/severeweather>

<http://www.fema.gov/hazard/thunderstorm>

Medical issues

During exercise/work or play and its HOT, drink plenty of fluids, water or sports drinks work the best, stay away from soda’s and caffeine products.

Individuals’ with respiratory issues, asthma, or allergies should always carry their medications with them.

Heat Cramps

- Heat cramps are muscle contractions, usually in the hamstring muscles (the muscles at the back of the calves). These contractions are forceful and painful.
- These cramps seem to be connected to heat, dehydration and poor conditioning, rather than to lack of salt or other mineral imbalances. They usually improve with rest, drinking water, and getting into a cool environment.

Heat Exhaustion

- Although partly due to exhaustion—and feeling like exhaustion, as the name implies—heat exhaustion is also a result of excessive heat and dehydration. The signs of heat exhaustion include paleness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, fainting, and a moderately increased temperature (101-102 degrees F), which, in this case is not truly a fever, but caused by the ambient heat. Rest and water may help in mild heat exhaustion; ice packs and cool environment (with fan blowing at the patient) may help. More severely exhausted patients will probably require medical intervention, with IV fluids, especially if vomiting keeps them from drinking enough. If you're unsure do the safe thing and dial 9-1-1, especially when dealing with children and the elderly.

Heat Stroke – A True Medical Emergency

- *If an individual has these symptoms, stop right there and dial 9-1-1- Heat stroke is a TRUE MEDICAL EMERGENCY!*
- Heat Stroke is the most severe form of heat related illnesses, It can occur even in people who are not exercising, if the weather is hot enough. These people have warm, flushed skin, and who are unable to sweat due to severe dehydration. Athletes who have heat stroke after vigorous exercise in hot weather, though, may still be sweating considerably. Whether exercise-related or not, though, a person with heat stroke usually has a very high temperature (106 degrees F or hotter), and may be delirious, unconscious, or having seizures. These individuals need to have their temperature reduced immediately with ice packs, and must be given IV fluids for re-hydration; they must be transported to the nearest hospital by EMS. These individuals will have to stay in the hospital for observation since many different body organs can fail in heat stroke.

Brought to you as a public service by Colchester Park and Recreation and Colchester Fire and Emergency medical Services