



SAFETY TIPS 2023 FALL SEASON

Fall season officially begins 23 September and runs through to 22 December. Fall, or Autumn as some refer to it, is the transition period from Summer to Winter. This is the time of the year when we begin to see leaves changing color, enjoy cooler temperatures, and see shorter days. The following 'Tips' are offered to highlight common Fall Season hazards, and upcoming seasonal changes:



SLIPPERY WHEN WET: One of the most recognizable features of fall are the leaves changing color. While it may be cool to capture the changing-colored leaves in photos, remember the reason it's called 'Fall' is because in time many of the leaves fall to the ground. Fall also brings its fair share of rain, and wet leaves can create slippery surfaces for walking, riding and driving. Be extremely careful when you encounter a large number of leaves. If walking over leaves, shorten your stride and take slow, choppy steps. Keep your head and shoulders centered over your feet to help maintain balance. If riding a bicycle or motorcycle, slow down as you approach the leaves, and avoid breaking or accelerating too quickly if leaves are under the tires. When driving, slow down, and be vigilant as leaves can cause automobile tires to spin and lose traction with their surface. Be sure to remove fallen leaves off car windshields and rear windows before driving to enhance visibility.

SAFETY FIRST: Kids (and some adults) have an instinctive reaction when they see a pile of leaves and immediately feel the need to jump into it without any concern for what's in the pile. To avoid potential injury, please exercise caution and check the leaf pile for lawn tools, animals and other hazards before taking the leaf-leap.



SCHOOL BUS: Fall season means school is back in session and school buses are back on the roadways. Motorists must be extremely cautious around school buses and bus stops. Be vigilant for kids walking to/from bus stops, especially in areas not well lit or during hours of darkness. Adhere to the yellow and red flashing lights on buses:

- **Yellow flashing lights** indicate the school bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists must slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.
- **Red flashing lights and extended stop arms** indicate the bus has stopped and children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop-arm is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.

SEASONAL CHANGES: While it may still be warm now, cooler temperatures are near. Pack a light jacket if planning to be out when sun goes down. Consider wearing reflective clothing to make yourself more visible to motorists if walking, as the days will be getting shorter. Remain aware of the weather forecast for your area. Plan appropriately to alleviate driving in inclement conditions. Keep vehicle wiper blades in optimum conditions, and windshield washer fluid reservoir full. If traveling in northern states ensure your vehicle is equipped with an emergency kit consisting of water, blankets, medicines, non-perishable foods, flashlight, shovel, sand/kitty litter (for traction), warm clothes, blankets, and phone/charger. Be aware that we are still in the height of Hurricane Season until November 30th. Stay prepared, stay alert, stay safe!

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DID YOU KNOW: According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), school buses are the most regulated vehicles on the road; they're designed to be safer than passenger vehicles in preventing crashes and injuries; and in every state, stop-arm laws protect children from other motorists. Students are about 70 times more likely to get to school safely when taking a bus instead of traveling by car.

FALL SEASON HOLIDAYS: Holidays occurring this Fall Season include Columbus Day (Monday, 9 October), Halloween (Tuesday, 31 October), Veteran's Day (Friday, 10 November), and Thanksgiving (Thursday, 23 November). These holidays are a great opportunity to relax and spend quality time with family and friends, just be sure to plan appropriately for any holiday weekend events.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME: Another Autumn occurrence happens the first Sunday in November (5th); the end of Daylight-Saving Time (DST). Turn clocks back (Fall Back) one hour. Let DST serve as a reminder to change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. These precious few minutes could save your life or someone you love. According to a report by National Fire Protection Association, in 2021, over 3,800 fire deaths occurred, and 14,700 fire injuries resulting in nearly \$16 billion in property damage.



FALL SEASON MISHAPS: The following MARFORCOM mishaps occurred over the last few Fall Seasons, and serve as a reminder to be aware of your surroundings, identify the risks and implement proper controls:

- Cpl, playing flag football, fell and suffered fractured arm and ruptured tendon. Given several days SIQ.
- Cpl, cut finger while carving a pumpkin. Underwent surgery to repair. Placed on convalescent leave.
- LCpl, was struck by a vehicle while changing a flat tire. Vehicle fled scene. LCpl had surgery to repair pelvic fracture and broken leg.
- 1stSgt, riding ATV, lost control in a curve and crashed. Suffered head injury and many fractured bones.
- Corpsman, involved in a house fire. Received second degree burns to over 12% of body.
- PVT, had a negligent discharge while handling a firearm, suffered leg injury. Treated and released.
- Cpl, while lighting a grill had lighter fluid drip on hand. Received severe hand burns when fluid ignited.

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE: Many homeowners find themselves raking leaves this time of year. If raking, take rest breaks often, wear gloves, hat, protective eyewear, and keep hydrated. When using a ladder to hang decorations, lights or cleaning out gutters, position the ladder at the appropriate 4 to 1 ratio (for every four feet ladder is raised, extend the base one foot from the wall). Always maintain three points of contact with ladder while ascending and descending, and keep your body centered between the ladder rails.

RISK MANAGEMENT (RM): Every Marine is responsible for breaking the chain of events that leads to a mishap. Incorporate 'In-Depth' or 'Deliberate' planning into the upcoming Fall Season and apply RM process to all activities. Exercise discipline in avoiding needless risks and their consequences. Use the 'Battle Buddy' system when engaging in outdoor activities. Make smart decisions and continue to watch out for one another.

RESOURCES: (Home Safety; Bus Safety; Smoke Alarms; Ladder Safety)

- <https://www.nsc.org/home-safety/tools-resources/seasonal-safety/autumn>
- <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/school-bus-safety>
- <https://www.esfi.org/smoke-alarms-save-lives/>
- <https://safe.menlosecurity.com/doc/docview/viewer/docNCBE8942418E94087fdd17b04156339b88c92fc4163fe36895d943cfeddc1b703fd0ef7fa0f3f>

Manage the Risk



Protect the Force