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Keep Safe and Well
at Home this Winter

Keep Safe and Well at Home this Winter

Contents:

- Keeping well
- Keeping active
- Keeping you warm
- Keeping your home warm
- Personal safety
- Fire safety
- Home security
- Mobility around the home



Keep Well and Warm in Winter – Facts you'll Warm to in Winter

- Your free electricity and other fuel allowances are there to be used, so don't be slow to use them! For information on the Household Benefits Package see the entitlements section or log on to www.welfare.ie
- Make sure there's a lagging jacket on your hot water cylinder
- You need at least one hot meal a day and regular hot drinks.

Going Outside in Bad Weather?

Cold weather can be a problem for anyone – but especially older people, children, people with a disability and those with long-term illness.

- Icy footpaths and roads can be very slippery and

- dangerous – make sure to wear boots or shoes with a good grip on the soles. An old pair of socks pulled on over your shoes is also effective
- Have a small supply of grit or salt available to put on paths and driveways to lessen the risk of slipping. Remember that black ice on paths, driveways or roads may not be visible
- Wear bright coloured clothing with a reflective section when out walking
- Listen to any advice being given by the emergency services

Keeping Well and Eating Well

Food is fuel. It helps keep you warm.

- Have at least one hot meal a day
- Have hot drinks throughout the day and one before bedtime
- Eat fresh fruit and vegetables daily

- Do not drink too much alcohol as it may increase the risk of falling
- Stock up on some basic food for days when you may be unable to get out to the shops or do not feel like cooking
- Listed below are nutritious and healthy foods to have in your cupboard for days when you can't cook or get out to the shops:
 - frozen or tinned fish
 - dried milk and long-life milk
 - tinned meat
 - tins of peas and beans
 - packet soup
 - Complian, cocoa, Bovril, Horlicks, Ovaltine.

Meals On Wheels

This service provides a hot meal to people of any age who are unable to cook for themselves or have no other way of getting a hot meal. It is available in lots of areas countrywide. Ask your public health nurse or GP.

Most supermarkets and some grocery shops provide a delivery service. Check with your local supermarket or grocery shop and if they do, keep their phone numbers in a convenient place.

The Bottle in the Fridge

This is a voluntary community alert programme for older and vulnerable people to ensure that in the event of an emergency, essential medical information is readily available in a prominent location in the home. The 'Bottle in the Fridge' initiative enables the fire, Garda Síochána, ambulance or other emergency agencies to

provide immediate help for a vulnerable person in the event of an emergency. For instance, if an accident or sudden illness occurs in the home, medical information is available straight away. Bottles are available to any organisation wishing to bring this programme to their community by contacting **Muintir na Tíre** 062 51163.

Keeping Active

- Walk around the house regularly
- If you have difficulty walking or moving your arms or legs, wiggle your fingers and toes while sitting.

Room Temperature Monitor Cards

Use a room temperature monitor card to make sure your house is warm enough. If the temperature falls below 16 degrees Celsius you could be at risk of hypothermia (when your body gets too cool to function properly). Room temperature monitor cards are available from Electric Ireland, Age Action, the HSE's Health Promotion Department, the Combat Poverty Agency and Sustainable Energy Ireland.



Timer Controls on your Immersion Heater

A timer control should be used on the immersion heater.

It will enable you to:

- Heat water only when you need it
- Switch on and off to suit your needs
- Save on electricity

Keeping you Warm

- Several layers of light clothes are better than one thick layer
- Wear thermal underwear during the winter
- Choose clothes made of wool, cotton, or fleecy synthetic fibres that are designed to be light and warm
- In very cold weather sleep with warm bedding, warm pyjamas or night dress and wear bed socks and a night cap
- In very cold weather, keep a flask with a hot drink by your bed
- Coldness can lead to an increase in chest infections including influenza, pneumonia and other health problems.

Signs and symptoms of hypothermia

Hypothermia is where the body has a low internal body temperature. If a person

has a number of the following symptoms they could be at risk of suffering from hypothermia:

- Not feeling cold, even when the temperature is low
- Drowsiness
- Slurred speech
- Feeling unsteady when moving
- Face is pale and puffy
- Feeling confused
- Skin is cold in areas that are normally covered by clothing, for example stomach, armpits etc.

Keeping your Home Warm

- Use your fuel allowances and Household Benefits Package. See the entitlements section or log on to www.welfare.ie for further details.
- Fit a good lagging jacket to your hot water cylinder. It will keep water warmer for longer
- Have a timer fitted to your immersion heater to reduce your energy costs
- Use CFL lightbulbs: they use 80% less electricity
- Keep the living room warm throughout the day (21 degrees if you are active, 24 degrees if inactive). If the temperature falls below 16 degrees Celsius you could be at risk of suffering from hypothermia
- Have heavy, well-fitted curtains. Draw them in the evening

- Heat your bedroom before going to bed and make sure the room is warm before getting up in the morning
- During very cold weather, living and sleeping in one room may be less costly. Prepare a bed in the living area. Ask a family member or friend to help you if needed
- Close internal doors and do not leave windows open for long periods
- Draught-proof around windows, external doors and letterbox flaps to retain heat
- Buy heaters that are controlled by a thermostat as they are more efficient.

Power Cuts

Always have a torch beside your bed and in your living room in case of a power cut and make sure to check the batteries regularly. If you depend on medical equipment at home, such as home kidney dialysis or oxygen machines, make sure to let Electric Ireland know. They will place you on their medical register.

Phone Electric Ireland:

1850 372 372 or
email service@electricireland.ie.

Better Energy Homes Scheme

If you find it difficult to afford to keep your home warm and comfortable or to pay the fuel and electricity bills, you could

benefit from the assistance available through the Better Energy Homes Scheme. This is a cash grant to home owners to reduce energy use, costs and greenhouse emissions and to improve the comfort levels within the home. The Warmer Homes Scheme, the Home Energy Saving Scheme and the Greener Homes Scheme were all merged into the Better Energy Homes Scheme. Please note that grant approval must be sought before any work starts or materials bought. The scheme is operated by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). For a list of the grants available and/or to apply online:

Contact

www.seai.ie or
SEAI, PO Box 119,
Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry.

Draught Proofing and Insulation

Not-for-profit organisations in some parts of the country provide a free draught proofing and insulation service to senior citizens living alone.

Energy Action IDA,

Unit 14,
Newmarket,
Dublin 8,
Tel: 01 454 5464.



Housing Aid for Older Persons Scheme

The Housing Aid for Older Persons Scheme is for improving the living conditions of older people by carrying out minor repairs to the main areas of an older person's home.

The type of work which will be grant-aided includes structural repairs or improvements, re-wiring, repair or replacement of windows and doors, the provision of water, sanitary services, heating, cleaning and painting.

The Housing Aid for Older Persons Scheme replaced the Essential Repair Grant and Special Housing Aid for the Elderly. To apply, contact the housing section of your local authority – for a list of local authorities, see www.citizensinformation.ie or contact your local Citizens Information Centre.

Personal Safety: Alarms

- If you would like to get a personal alarm, ask your public health nurse, doctor or local Garda



Social Monitored Alarms

Emergency Response is Ireland's largest dedicated social monitoring alarm centre. It provides telecare solutions that support independent living to 33,000 people throughout Ireland, the majority of whom are older people. Its products are designed to protect people living in their own home and help deliver peace of mind.

- Get a relative or friend to check that it is working
- If you have a personal alarm, make sure to wear it at all times.

Seniors Alert Scheme

The Seniors Alert Scheme provides grant assistance towards the purchase and installation of equipment to enable older persons without sufficient means to continue to live securely in their homes with confidence, independence and peace of mind. Grant support is available towards the purchase and installation of:

- Personal monitored alert systems and
- Other items to improve the safety and security of the home (including monitored smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, internal emergency lighting and external security lighting).

Information on the Seniors Alert Scheme, the list of voluntary registered groups or the Scheme of Community Support for Older People can be obtained by contacting the Community Support for Older People (CSOP) unit in the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Grant support can be accessed through community and voluntary groups registered with the department.

For more information contact:

Tel: 071 918 6700

Email: seniorsalert@environ.ie

You can also contact

Muintir na Tíre

Community Development Officers
www.muintir.ie or
 Tel: 062 51163

For example, Emergency Response has a social monitored alarm, Lifeline 400, which gives the user access to a 24-hour helpline using a phone unit, pendant or wrist trigger, enabling users to live independently, secure in the knowledge that help is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The organisation also supplies equipment like bogus caller buttons, monitored smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, movement detectors and heat detectors, to enhance the reassurance and safety of the individual.

Each piece of equipment provided by Emergency Response is monitored individually – therefore, in the event of an alarm being raised with the monitoring centre, the staff can immediately identify the specific issue within the home.

Emergency Response equipment fulfils the needs of not only individuals living alone and feeling insecure, but also people who have specific requirements – for example, someone prone to falling can avail of a fall detector, or in specific cases an epilepsy sensor can be installed in the home. In the event of any of this equipment alerting, the Emergency Response monitoring centre will be aware of the specific issue and will notify the relevant parties of the emergency. The monitoring centre employs 30 members of staff on a 24/7 basis so there is always someone there in the event of an emergency.

All emergency protocols and procedures are based upon the Tunstall (UK) model full disaster recovery facility to the UK monitoring centre in the event of an issue arising. All data is backed up remotely both to the UK and to a remote data storage centre in Dublin via broadband on a nightly basis, so continuity of service can be guaranteed. It also ensures that all of our information is no more than 24 hours old. Emergency Response is an ISO-approved company.

Emergency Response Ltd
Ryland Road, Bunclody,
Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford

Contact

Tel: 1850 247999
Fax: 353 53 937 6943
Email: sales@
emergencyresponse.ie
Web:
www.emergencyresponse.ie

Seniors Alert – Communities Supporting Older People

Seniors Alert – Communities Supporting Older People provides funds to local community and voluntary organisations to install personal monitored alarms and items of home security to older people.

The scheme gives grants to provide security measures for people aged 65 or over living alone, or living in households made up exclusively of older people, and who are unable to install or buy such equipment themselves.

For further information on this scheme, please contact the **CSOP Unit in the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government** on:
Tel: 071 918 6700
Email: seniorsalert@environ.ie

Where to Apply Threshold

21 Stoneybatter, Dublin 7
Tel: 01 678 6096
Fax: 01 677 2407
Website: www.threshold.ie
Email: advice@threshold.ie

Irish Council for Social Housing

50 Merrion Square East,
Dublin 2.
Tel: 01 661 8334
Fax: 01 661 0320
Website: www.icsh.ie
Email: info@icsh.ie

SAS Unit, Community and Voluntary Supports Division, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government,

Teeling Street, Tubbercurry,
Co. Sligo.
Website: www.environ.ie

Fire Safety

Fire safety in your home is vitally important. Here you will find information on how to be safe and protect your home against fire. A fire in the home is very dangerous. It destroys furniture, appliances and paintwork. But most worryingly of all, fire could harm you or your loved ones through smoke inhalation, burns or even death. It is vitally important that you take action today and follow the four golden rules to fire safety in the home.

- Install working smoke alarms and test them regularly
- Make a fire escape plan and practice it often
- Check for fire dangers in your home and correct them
- Carry out a 'last thing at night' routine.



Fire prevention

Check your home room-by-room for fire dangers and correct them. Remember, most domestic fires start in the living room, bedroom and kitchen at night while people are sleeping.

Safety Tips

- Test your smoke alarm batteries regularly. Alarms are available with both sound and light signals. If you need help ask a family member or friend.
- Never fill a hot water bottle with boiling water – use a cover on it. Do not use a hot water bottle with an electric blanket
- Leave a low-energy light on overnight in the hall/stairs area to avoid accidents.

In the living area: open fires

- Always place a properly-fitting spark guard and fire guard in front of an open fire
- Never place anything to dry on the fireguard or sparkguard
- Don't store magazines, clothing or combustible items near a fire
- Never use an open fire to air clothes, as this is a major fire risk
- Always place the spark guard and fire guard in front of the fireplace when you are going to bed

Chimney cleaning

Chimneys have to be cleaned regularly. Follow this recommended cleaning guide:

- Wood-burning fires should

- be cleaned four times a year
- Solid fuel fires should be cleaned once a year if using smokeless fuel
- Solid fuel fires should be cleaned twice a year if using coal
- Oil fires should be cleaned once a year
- Gas fires should be cleaned once a year if designed for sweeping.

Portable heaters

- Always be careful when using portable heaters
- Position them away from furniture, curtains and flammable items
- Never move heaters when in use
- Ensure they are plugged out before leaving the house or going to bed.

Candles

- Never leave lit candles unattended, and keep candles in proper holders
- Position candles away from draughts
- Keep candles away from curtains, clothing or bedding as they may catch fire
- Avoid moving a lit candle
- Blow out candles fully before you leave the house or before you go to bed.

Smoking

- If a smoker, never smoke if you are tired and/or relaxing in a chair
- Remember, medication and alcohol can make you drowsy



and smoking is a real fire risk when you are tired

- Always use an ashtray if smoking
- Empty all ashtrays before going to bed – make sure the contents are fully extinguished.

In the bedroom

- Never smoke in bed
- Keep a torch or a flashlight near your bed for emergency lighting
- Bring your portable or mobile phone to your bedroom for emergency use
- Never leave your mobile phone charger plugged in at night or when you leave the house.

Electric blankets

- Use electric blankets

properly and follow the manufacturer's instructions

- Get your electric blanket checked regularly for wear and damage such as frayed flex, scorch marks, loose connections, etc
- Always turn off and unplug your electric blanket before going to sleep or going out.

In the kitchen

Put a fire blanket and fire extinguisher within easy reach in the kitchen and learn how to use them.

Cookers

- Keep cookers clean – grease is a fire risk
- Turn off the cooker when not in use
- Never use a cooker for drying clothes

- Check the cooker is switched off properly before going to bed
- Clean or replace filters in extractor fans on regular basis
- Avoid using open chip pans – they are a major fire risk.

Electrical appliances

- Use electrical appliances carefully and store them properly when not in use
- Never overload sockets as this is a major fire risk
- Never run electric cables across cookers
- Switch off and plug out electrical appliances when not in use
- If cables or plugs are damaged, worn or frayed, contact a qualified electrician.

Detection: Smoke Alarms

- Install smoke alarms today and test them regularly
- At least two smoke alarms (one on each floor) should suit most homes
- Check the smoke alarms often by pressing the test button
- Replace batteries when they are not working and every year for a standard one-year smoke alarm
- If you have a mains-operated smoke alarm, ensure you switch off the smoke alarm at the mains before cleaning, it and remember to turn it on again.

Fire Escape Plan

In an emergency, dial 999 or 112 for the fire brigade, an ambulance or the Gardaí and remember: **GET OUT! CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE! STAY OUT!**

- Make a fire escape plan and practise it often
- Keep escape routes clear at all times
- Stay calm and put your fire escape plan into action
- Check doors with the back of your hand – if they are warm it means the fire is on the other side, so don't open them. Only open the doors you need to escape
- If there is smoke, crawl along the floor where the air will be cleaner
- Raise the alarm, shout to

wake everyone up and make your way out by the quickest route – usually the front door

- Do not investigate the fire
- Once everyone is out of the house, call the fire brigade
- Do not go back into the house until the fire brigade says it's safe to do so.

Routine Checks

Carry out a 'last thing at night' series of routine checks:

- Ensure fires are out and spark guards are in place in front of open fires
- Switch off and unplug electrical items before going out or going to bed
- Don't leave your TV or radio on stand-by
- Ensure your remote control is not down the side of the armchair – this can be hazardous if buttons are pressed, overheat and catch fire
- Plug out the mobile phone charger when you are going out or to bed
- Check every room and close all doors when going to bed
- Switch off and plug out your electric blanket before going to sleep
- If your exit requires keys for opening, ensure the key is in the lock before going to bed
- Ensure escape routes are clear before going to bed.

Emergency contacts

Emergency: dial 999 or 112

National Safety Council
LoCall: 1890 200 844
or 01 496 3422
Fire Services and Emergency Planning Section: LoCall
1890 202 021
or 01 888 2381

Home Security

There are a few simple steps that you can use to ensure that you and your belongings are secure in and around your home.

Outside

- A thorny hedge along the boundary of your property can put thieves off. But make sure that passers-by can still see the front of your home
- Burglars don't like gravel – it's noisy to walk on
- Don't build pergolas, gazebos and so on too near to the house – they can help thieves reach upper windows
- Solid fences or walls (particularly those with a flat or rounded top) are

Security Tips

- Never let strangers into your house. Ask for identification
- Do not employ workmen who call to your door
- Do not keep large amounts of money at home
- Consider installing extra security lighting.

relatively easy for a burglar to climb over. Fixing trellising to the top can make it more difficult

- Burglars often break in to steal the keys of high-value cars. So take care of your keys and if you have a garage, keep your car in it rather than on the drive
- Never leave a spare key in a convenient hiding place such as under the doormat, in a flowerpot or behind a loose brick – thieves know all the usual hiding places. Good lighting will put most thieves off as they are far too visible.

Inside

- If you move into a new home, change the front and back door locks immediately – other people may have keys that fit
- Never leave your house or car keys in or near a door or window. Some thieves have been known to use a fishing rod or magnet on a stick to steal them through the letterbox
- Decide on a safe place for your keys and always use it so you can find them in an emergency
- Ensure your door is fitted with a chain or bar and a peep hole if it doesn't have a window or other means of checking who's at the door
- Glass panels on or around doors are especially vulnerable, so replace them with laminated glass. Or you

can buy special film to stick to the inside that will do the same thing

- Have a burglar alarm and panic button fitted. There are many types to choose from and most are relatively inexpensive. They are a deterrent to thieves
- Fit five-lever mortise deadlocks to all outside doors, including French doors – and make sure you use them. Keep the doors locked even when you are at home
- Make it look like you are at home when you are out – leave on a light or a radio
- Keep your mobile phone with you and make a call to the Gardaí if you are suspicious or nervous.

Here's a quick reminder of some of the things you can do to improve the security around your home:

- If you are replacing or fitting new doors and windows, get ones that are certified and that lock securely
- Fit mortise locks to all front and back doors and locks to all downstairs windows or windows that are easy to reach
- Keep your house and car keys safe and away from doors and windows
- Fit a burglar alarm – but make sure it is installed properly and works
- Keep your garage and garden shed locked with

Home Instead Senior Care's Fall Prevention Checklist:

- Q:** Are pathways and footpaths outside the home even and free from cracks?
- Q:** Are the walkways free from clutter?
- Q:** Are rugs and carpets secured with non-skid tape?
- Q:** Are non-skid mats placed in the bath tub?
- Q:** Are there handrails or grab bars installed beside the stairs or in the bathroom next to the toilet and bath?
- Q:** Is the kitchen floor free from liquid, grease or any other slippery substance?
- Q:** Have wheels been removed from all items of furniture?
- Q:** Do you use a nightlight to keep the bedroom lit at night time?
- Q:** Do you have light switches placed at each end of the stairway?
- Q:** Are steps visible?

proper security locks, and keep any tools secure and out of sight

- Trim back any plants or hedges that a burglar could hide behind
- Make sure you have up-to-date insurance.

When you are Away

- Don't leave your curtains closed during the daytime
- Cancel any milk or



newspaper deliveries when you go away

- Ask a neighbour to look after your home.

**BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR,
BE AWARE, CHECK ON
YOUR NEIGHBOURS.
DO NOT LEAVE IT TO
OTHERS – THEY MAY
HAVE LEFT IT TO YOU.**

Mobility Around the Home

Being able to stay living independently at home is important to older people. However, doing so can be a significant health risk: many accidents occur within the home, as stairs and other obstacles become more of a challenge. You may need to have various mobility and access assists installed if

you find it more difficult to get around. There are thousands of products out there that you can use and financial assistance in the form of grants and funding is available. Some of these include:

Orthopaedic beds

Orthopaedic beds help to avoid back pain and muscular discomfort, and you benefit from a good night's sleep. Millions of people suffer from back problems, but in many cases the solution can be the replacement of an existing bed with an orthopaedic one. Switching to an orthopaedic mattress can have similar benefits.

The human spine takes the well-documented form of a

double 'S' shape, and back problems arise when adequate support is not provided to the spine during rest. Orthopaedic beds and mattresses are designed with spine, skeletal and muscular support as their primary objectives and they allow the back to rest and recover from the activities of the day. Automatic beds are widely available to help you into a sitting position, raise the legs, etc and are not as expensive as you might think.

Stair lifts

Installing a stair lift is an effective way of staying in one's home for as long as possible and as safely as possible. It does not have to represent as large a financial outlay as one might expect, with many companies offering payment plans to spread the cost. When purchasing a stair lift, it is best to shop around for the best deal as many companies will offer large discounts, especially when a stair lift is purchased along with other devices such as bath lifts and orthopaedic beds. A small investment now can yield significant rewards in terms of maintained independence.

Bath lifts

There are various types and styles of bath lifts available on the market depending on the size of your bathroom, the level of assistance you need and

whether or not you have a carer, etc. There are also walk-in baths available, along with complete bathroom refits, using handles and supports throughout the room that allow you full use of all your facilities. For most home improvements, be sure to check out in advance if there are any grants available, but bear in mind that most companies that deal in these products will offer financial packages to help with the costs.

Mobility Aids Grant Scheme

The Mobility Aids Grant Scheme provides grants for works designed to address mobility problems in the home. For example, the grant can be used for the purchase and installation of handrails. The grant is primarily for older people, but people with a disability can also access the scheme. The amount of assistance you can get under the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme is less than under the Housing Aid for Older People Scheme and the Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability. The Mobility Aids Grant Scheme is a useful scheme if you need minor adaptations or improvements done quickly. You can apply to your local authority.

Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability

If you need to adapt your

home to meet the needs of a member of the household who has a disability, you can apply for a Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability. Apply to the Housing Department of your local authority.

Ireland Becomes Age-Friendly

There is growing recognition that many of the factors that improve the quality of life for older people are influenced at local level, and therefore that local government, in partnership with other local service providers, community groups and older people's organisations, can play a significant role in planning for and developing communities that are age-friendly.

For example, good urban design can play a major role in helping older people to continue to live and remain active in their local communities. Safe pedestrian environments, easy access to shopping centres, a mix of housing choices, the availability of local services such as health centres and recreational facilities are all important elements that can positively affect the ageing experience.

The Ageing Well Network has, through its affiliation with the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities programme, developed

and expanded a nationwide programme of Age-Friendly Counties. The programme is a national initiative aimed at developing an 'age friendly county programme' in all local authority areas in the country. To date, there are 11 such programmes fully operational, with a further ten on the starting blocks and the ambition is to have the remaining 13 areas operational by the end of 2013.

The overarching goal of Ireland's Age Friendly Counties Programme is that every county in Ireland will be a great place in which to grow old. The programme works from the premise that older people are a valuable resource to their communities and to our society in general. The voice of the older person is at the heart of the Age Friendly Counties Programme.

Based on consultations with older people, the Global Age Friendly Cities programme argued that simple and cost-effective changes in eight key domains of life can be enormously beneficial in determining whether older people can participate in and feel confident in being 'out and about' in their communities. The eight areas covered by the Age-Friendly Cities project are: respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, housing,



community support and health services, communication and information, outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation and social participation.

The programme now involves a clear three-stage process:

1. Formation of a strong alliance of senior managers across the local authority, health service, police, business community, voluntary organisations and academic institutions, with representatives from the Older People's Forum, chaired by the county/city manager
2. Consultation with older people and their organisations through a variety of approaches,

the formation of an Older Person's Forum, and the development of a draft strategy reflecting the priorities articulated by older people and key stakeholders

3. Finalisation of the strategy and a process for reviewing and supporting implementation as well as affiliation to the WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities.

The different alliances have now built up a strong track record of imaginative changes at local level – from men's sheds and bogus caller cards to age-friendly business recognition schemes, lengthened traffic light

crossing times and 'age-friendly town' initiatives. The programme is supported at national level by a national implementation group, comprising assistant secretaries from four government departments, an assistant police commissioner, the head of older people's services in the health service, county managers and the director of Ageing Well Network, the national promotion body for the programme.

For more information on the Age Friendly Counties programme, please log on to www.agefriendlycounties.com or contact the Ageing Well Network on (01) 612 7040.

Home Instead Says: Be Safe, Be Seen, Be Winter Proof

Pedestrians and cyclists are particularly vulnerable on Irish roads. Wearing a simple high-visibility vest will reduce the risk of being involved in a fatal or serious injury collision. Home Instead would like to remind all road users of their vulnerability, and we ask that you take personal responsibility for your actions on the road and to make sure you and those in your household wear a high visibility vest when walking or cycling, day or night.

Recent winters in Ireland have been severe, with snow, ice and freezing temperatures

lasting for several weeks. Home Instead would like to offer older people a few more tips from www.winterready.ie for those months when temperatures plummet.

- Listen to the weather forecasts
- Stay indoors if possible when the weather is bad
- Be extra careful if you must walk on icy paths or roads
- Buy salt to put on the footpaths near your home. This will help to melt the ice
- Keep in contact with your family, friends and neighbours
- Before winter sets in, get your boiler and pipes checked by a qualified plumber and keep their phone number handy in

case of heating or plumbing problems. If you use natural gas, always use a registered gas installer

- Try to keep some money for extra fuel. Or if you feel you won't have enough money for heating, contact the Money, Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) which can help you plan a budget
- Buy extra groceries when you do your weekly shopping in case you can't get back to the shop for a while because of bad weather.

If you need some extra support around the home, you can contact Home Instead Senior Care on 1890 930 013 or visit www.homeinstead.ie.

