

Don't let the change of seasons put you at risk

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(HealthDay)—Fall can be beautiful, but changing weather can cause

hazards. The key to staying safe is being aware of the potential risks and how to avoid them, according to the *Farmers' Almanac*.

The reference book, which is published annually, offers the following advice on some weather challenges you could face this autumn, including:

- **Flooding.** Fall is often rainy, and [hurricane season](#) lasts until the end of November. Flooded roads and sidewalks may result. Never try to drive or walk through a flooded area or let children or pets play in the water. There is no way to know what lies below the surface. This is especially important if water is moving fast. Instead, turn around and find a safer route to your destination.
- **Leaves.** When leaves pile up, they can spell trouble. Fallen leaves may become wet and slippery. If temperatures drop and leaves begin to freeze, cars can lose traction and slide as if they were on ice. When driving, take it slow because downed leaves can cover up road markings and hide potholes. Maintain plenty of space between you and other cars. Never drive through leaf piles.
- **Shorter days.** Drivers must contend with less visibility in the fall as dusk arrives earlier in the day. It's important to be mindful of people walking with pets on the side of the road, bikers and children playing outside. Fall mornings can be foggy, but more animals are active at this time of day and year. Drive slowly on curvy or narrow roads and be mindful of road signs that warn about animal crossings and school zones.
- **Fickle weather.** Weather can change quickly this time of year, especially at higher elevations. When hiking, never travel alone. Dress in layers and be prepared with a waterproof jacket and drinking water. Taking a boat ride to admire the foliage? The water may seem serene, but wear a life jacket. If you are submerged in water of any temperature for a long period, your

body temperature can drop dangerously, which can impair even strong swimmers.

It's also time to take care of fall maintenance at your home. The publication offers this checklist:

- Get your furnace serviced by a professional who will clean or replace its filters. An annual service contract can help reduce your cost.
- Replace batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Be sure there is a working fire extinguisher in the house and everyone knows how to use it.
- Never burn outdoors when fire danger is high. Flying embers can travel in the air and start fires. Do not leave burning candles unattended—even Jack-o-Lanterns.
- Get your chimney inspected. A chimney sweep will clean out nests and other debris. Use fireplace screens and never use lighter fluid, kerosene or gasoline in a fireplace. Never leave a fireplace unattended.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides more [fall health and safety tips](#).

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