

Safe Driving for Seniors

Come to a January S.A.L.T. meeting to learn about safe driving. Clark County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Alex Schoening, collision investigator and driving instructor, will be sharing his expertise on driving in a variety of winter conditions and vehicle safety. S.A.L.T. meetings are free and open to all seniors!

<p>WEST Meeting January 18, 2016 11:00 a.m.</p> <p>40 et 8 Community Rm. 7607 NE 26th Ave. Vancouver, WA 98665</p>	<p>EAST Meeting January 25, 2016 11:00 a.m.</p> <p>Camas Police 2100 NE 3rd Ave. Camas, WA</p>
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To receive the free monthly S.A.L.T. Times Newsletter, call 397-2211 ext. 3380 or send an e-mail to: sheriffcommunityoutreach@clark.wa.gov. **For other formats:** Clark County ADA Office, **Voice** (360) 397-2000, **Relay** (800) 833-6384, **E-mail** ADA@clark.wa.gov



How Can You Protect Yourself From Tax Identity Theft?

File your tax return as early in tax season as you can. Use a secure internet connection if you file electronically. If you mail your return, send it directly from the post office.

To help you learn more about tax identity theft, the FTC will host Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week, January 25-29, 2016. They'll have tips, webinars you can join, Twitter chats, and more. If you'd like to host your own event during Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week, there are resources you can use at ftc.gov/taxidtheft.

Seniors and Law Enforcement Together
Clark County Sheriff's Office
P.O. Box 410
Vancouver, WA 98666



Seniors And Law Enforcement Together

S.A.L.T. TIMES

January 2016

S.A.L.T. Senior Social Highlights

Thank you to everyone who came out for the S.A.L.T. Senior Social on December 14th. There were over 50 seniors and several law enforcement officials "together" at this festive occasion. Several of the seniors were retired police officers and/or former military so it seemed fitting to recognize them for their service. Thanks to Addus HealthCare and Columbia Ridge Senior Living for providing the wonderful assortment of food. Columbia Ridge also donated a wonderful gift basket that was given to the lucky ticket holder. And thanks to everyone who brought books for the sheriff's office/jail library book drive!

The next Seniors And Law Enforcement Together event is the annual spaghetti luncheon so mark your calendar for February 15th and watch for more details next month.



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Aging in Place Safely in Winter

When it comes to aging in place, it is helpful to take a seasonal approach to managing risks. Whether you are an aging adult or a loved one of aging parents, reevaluating the living arrangements every 3 months can really keep you in tune with changing needs and preparations for the coming season. It is important to continually ask, "Is my home meeting my current needs and supporting my safety? Could some small changes reduce the risk of a fall or injury? Do my spouse and I have a high quality of life here?" Winter can be one of the most important seasons to prepare for when aging in place.

Here are a few tips to help you and your family be ready and stay safe.

Staying Warm

Keeping the house warm is an important aspect of winter living for all of us. As we age, the body tends to have more difficulty retaining heat and staying warm is more and more important. Especially if you have a beautiful old home, draw curtains over the windows to help cold air from seeping in and check doorways for proper insulation of gaps. Dressing in more layers will also help the body acclimate, especially during transitions between indoor and outdoor environments. Pay close attention to those with dementia, as one of the symptoms of the disease is an inability to dress appropriately for

weather conditions. If your loved one exhibits difficult behaviors such as wandering, take extra precautions in the winter. If they were to wander outside, a fall or hypothermia can put them at extra risk.

Preventing a Fire

As we seek to keep warm, it is important to maintain safety as well. If heaters are used, make sure they are a good distance from the body or blankets as they can unintentionally burn items that are too near. If your loved one uses an electric blanket, be sure that it is kept on a low setting and has



an automatic shutoff to prevent it from being left on too long. In the winter, we tend to fill our house with light through candles, fires in the fireplace, and strings of colorful electric lights. Be sure that all lights are blown out, unplugged, and extinguished before leaving the house or going to bed. Changing the batteries in the smoke detectors and making sure your house has carbon monoxide detectors is another good thing to do this time of year. If your loved one uses oxygen within the house

take extra precaution to keep cigarettes and open flames away from the tank and oxygen tubes. This will all help reduce the risk of a fire.

Falls

One of the biggest risks within the home for aging adults are falls. However, in winter that simple trip to the grocery store, pharmacy, or a friend's house can be all the more treacherous. Make sure your aging loved one has the tools and ability to manage their outdoor stairs and walkways with salt and a shovel. If this task may put them at greater risk, create a plan together to have a family member or volunteer help maintain their outdoor spaces in the winter. Make sure railings are sturdy and free from décor. As the days are shorter and we are spending more time in the dark, make sure that indoor and outdoor stairwells are well lit.

Emergency Plan

For aging adults, there are many different situations that can present an emergency in winter. It is important to have a plan in place to address the "what ifs". Consolidate emergency contact information into one area including family, a local friend or family member, and utility companies. If the power were to go, or the furnace to break, it is crucial to get help right away. In the event of a winter storm, or natural disaster, have a plan for where to meet and how to get to aging adults. Talk to neighbors close by to help support

Does the Dark Got You Down?

It's winter, that time of year when we go to work while it is still dark outside and then return home in darkness. If your mood goes dark this time of year too, you may suffer from seasonal affective disorder.

According to the Mayo Clinic, seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression related to changes in seasons. In most cases, symptoms appear during late fall or early winter and go away in spring or early summer. It is thought to be the body's reaction to less light and colder weather.

People affected with SAD are more likely to live in northern states, and it is more common in women than men.

Symptoms of SAD are similar to other types of depression:

- Feeling depressed or sluggish
- Low energy
- Sleep problems
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Irritability or feeling agitated
- Feelings of anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating

Mental health professionals suggest several strategies to reduce SAD symptoms:

- Lighten up: Get as much exposure to light as possible. Open blinds, trim tree branches that block sunlight and get outside—even if it is rainy. If that isn't enough, you may want an indoor light box for therapy.
- Exercise: Physical activity can help reduce stress and anxiety that can increase SAD symptoms.
- Consider vitamins: Taking vitamin D can help replace what the sun helps us produce naturally in other seasons. Other supplements such as Omega 3 fatty acids are being used to treat SAD symptoms. Always check with your doctor before taking something new.
- Get social: Connect with people you enjoy being around. Being with friends can lift your spirit and make you feel supported.
- Ask for help: If you are unable to beat the winter blues, contact your doctor. You may need other therapies, such as counseling or medication. Depression can negatively affect your health and should not go untreated.

For more information, check out these Websites: regence.com/the-sad-truth, nami.org/factsheets/sad_factsheet.pdf and mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder.



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one another and keep an eye out for safety as well. Keep a stockpile of potable water and nonperishable food as well as a full emergency kit for seniors to make sure your loved ones would have their basic needs met for 3-4 days if they were unable to leave their house.

Driving

If you are concerned about a loved one driving, winter can be a really important time to assess the risks, have those difficult conversations, and create a backup plan for winter driving. Delayed response times and driving on slick roads can put many people in danger. As part of your plan, consider having a backup system for transportation when the roads are too bad and define what that means. Help your loved one stock their kitchen with extra food and supplies so they can wait out a couple days of bad weather before having to go to the store. You may consider having your doctor write an extra prescription to minimize the amount of pharmacy trips or delegate tasks that include driving to a family member. When it comes to winter transportation issues, also watch for isolation and make sure that your aging loved ones have opportunities to keep a regular schedule, get out of the house, maintain mobility, and have social engagement with friends and family.

Source: Sound Options, Inc.