



MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Take Care of Yourself Before You Take Care of the Snow St. John Ambulance Wants People to be Cautious when Shoveling Snow

December 7, 2010 (Toronto, ON) – With the arrival of snow, people across Ontario are getting ready to dig out their cars and clear their sidewalks. But it's important to be cautious. Research has linked snow shoveling in extreme cold to an increase in hospitalizations or deaths due to heart attack. Before breaking out the shovel, St. John Ambulance has some helpful tips to help prevent strain or injury, so you can enjoy a happy, healthy winter.

- **Don't Be Proud:** If you have a pre-existing heart condition, ask for help. You can approach members of your family, hire a professional service or pay a young person in the neighborhood. That way you take care of the snow, and stay healthy.
- **Stretch:** Shoveling snow is a good form of exercise and just like any other workout you should enjoy a good warm-up before you start.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Since this is exercise, you're going to sweat. Drink lots of water to replace lost fluids.
- **Make a Plan:** Break the task into small segments and pause between each section for a little rest. Don't try to rush it or you may strain yourself.
- **Digest Awhile:** It takes a lot of energy for your body to digest a big meal, so wait awhile after eating before engaging in strenuous activities such as snow shoveling.
- **Lift with Your Knees:** Take care of your back when you shovel; bend at the knee rather than stooping to lift the snow.
- **Learn Your Limits and Work Within Them:** If you're tired, take a break. If you begin to feel dizzy, nauseous, light-headed or experience a sudden onset of discomfort or pain in the chest, shortness of breath or severe headache, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- **Learn CPR:** If you're concerned about someone in your household or neighbourhood, consider training in CPR. For every minute a person goes without CPR, their chances of survival decreases by upwards of 10%. You can help someone beat the odds.

For over 125 years, St. John Ambulance has been training over 140,000 Ontarians annually in first aid and other health care related courses and remains dedicated to saving lives at work, home and play. With over 4,000 volunteers contributing over half a million hours of community service a year, St. John Ambulance is an integral part of the community offering such unique and innovative programs as: medical first response, disaster response, car seat clinics, health and safety related youth programs and therapy dog services. As a charitable, humanitarian organization, proceeds from St. John Ambulance's first aid training and first aid product sales directly support these vital community services programs. For more information on St. John Ambulance training courses and volunteer opportunities or to contact your local branch, visit www.sja.ca/on.