

The Road To Justice Starts Here

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REFERRALS

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MAKE WINTER DRIVING less of an adventure

According to the Federal Highway Administration, weather conditions play a role in one-quarter of auto accidents on U.S. roadways each year. Prominent among them are winter's snow, sleet, and ice.

Drivers should allow greater following distances and drive more slowly in wintry conditions—which doesn't always happen. Some people are overconfident because they have all-wheel or four-wheel-drive vehicles. These vehicles improve acceleration in snow, but they don't shorten stopping distance or help with ice. Also be mindful that a driver can be traveling under the speed limit but still be driving too fast for conditions.

Beware of black ice, which blends in with the roadway. It might also be hiding beneath a coating

of snow or in the shade. Ice forms more quickly on bridges and overpasses because they lose heat from both sides, top and bottom.

If venturing out into the snow, clear your entire windshield and side and back windows to improve visibility—not just a few small patches—and turn on your lights. Remove snow accumulation from the roof, hood, trunk, and also from your license plate. In some states, including Pennsylvania, it's the law. Flying snow can obscure the vision of a driver behind you or become a deadly projectile.

If you fishtail, don't panic. Steer toward the direction you want to go. Apply steady pressure to antilock brakes. If you don't have antilock brakes, lightly pump your brakes.



Remember, winter weather does not absolve drivers of fault in car accidents. Drivers have a duty to drive responsibly and safely, no matter what the conditions.

If you are injured as a result of another driver's negligence, call us at (814) 833-7100 for a free evaluation of your case. For more information, download our consumer guide titled *The Ultimate Guide to Car Accidents in Pennsylvania* at www.YourErieLawyers.com. ■

field sobriety tests –

WHAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW



If you are ever pulled over on suspicion of driving under the influence, you'll likely be asked by the police officer to perform a series of field sobriety tests. Most people don't know that they can politely decline to take field sobriety tests in most states, including Pennsylvania. (In fact, it's usually a good idea to decline to do so.)

To put it simply, field sobriety tests are designed for you to fail. They're subjective, inaccurate, and many times performed incorrectly by officers.

While there are a variety of field sobriety tests, the most common and widely used are the:

- Horizontal gaze nystagmus test – the officer asks you to follow a moving pen with your eyes while keeping your head still
- Walk-and-turn test – the officer asks you to walk 9 steps in a straight line heel-to-toe, then turn and do the same while returning to where you started
- One-leg stand test – you stand on one leg, with your chin up and your hands by your side and then count aloud

Some of the inherent problems with these tests include the possibility that the person asked to perform the tests may be too old or out of shape to “pass” them; the terrain or even the types of shoes a person is wearing can affect balance tests; the officer may give unclear instructions regarding the tests; and ultimately, because of the subjectivity involved, the officer can rely on his or her own scoring method to guarantee failure.

As mentioned above, your best bet is to politely decline to take field sobriety tests. (Note – Generally, however, unlike field sobriety tests, most people *should* submit to chemical testing, like blood tests and breath tests because your refusal of chemical testing will result in a suspension of your driver's license.)

If you do submit to any of these tests and are later charged with a DUI, you should contact an experienced DUI lawyer to mount a vigorous defense and explore your options. For more information, download our free consumer guide titled *How to Choose a DUI Lawyer* at www.YourErieLawyers.com, or call us at (814) 833-7100. ■

cauliflower soup

Seeking a cozy, warm meal perfect for the holidays? This cauliflower soup can be made in a jiffy!

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 leek, chopped (the white and light green parts)
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1 small head of cauliflower, cored and sliced
- 4 c. low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ c. heavy cream
- 1 bunch of chives
- ½ c. canola or grapeseed oil



Preparation

- Heat butter and oil in a large pot on medium heat. Add onion, leek, and ½ tsp. salt. Cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until very tender (but not brown), 10-12 minutes.
- Stir in garlic and cook 1 minute. Add cauliflower, broth, and cream. Simmer 15-18 minutes, until cauliflower is tender.
- Puree until smooth. (A handheld blender is best, but you can use a standard blender in batches.)
- Separately, in a blender, puree chives and ½ c. oil until smooth. Transfer to small saucepan and cook on medium until mixture begins to simmer. Strain through a coffee filter set over a measuring cup.
- Drizzle the chive oil that was just made over the soup. Add cracked pepper, if you wish. ■

TIDBITS OF

Christmas song history

Whether at the mall, church services, family Christmas gatherings, or on the radio, Christmas music contributes to the mood of the season—and some songs come with interesting backstories.

“Deck the Halls,” written in 16th-century Wales, was originally a downright bawdy tune intended for New Year’s Eve. Lyrics such as “Fill the mead cup, drain the barrel” and “Oh how soft my fair one’s bosom” were cleaned up in the 1860s with the lyrics we know today.

“Jingle Bells” was originally a Thanksgiving ditty entitled “One Horse Open Sleigh.” James Lord Pierpont of Medford, Massachusetts, wrote the song for the children in his father’s Sunday school class. They loved it, wanted to sing it again at Christmas, and the rest is history. Thanksgiving gets short-shrifted again.

“The Twelve Days of Christmas” was published in England in 1780 but is thought to have originated in France. The “partridge in a pear tree” line is challenging. Partridges are ground nesters, lousy fliers, and don’t frequent trees. However, the French word for partridge is “perdrix,” pronounced “pehr-dree.” Side by side: “pehr-dree” and “pear tree.” Linguistic malfeasance, perhaps?

Nat King Cole recorded “The Christmas Song” in 1946 with his band, the Nat King Cole Trio; it is one of the top 20 Christmas songs of all time. In his first recording, he mistakenly added an “s” to “reindeer”: “... to see if reindeers really know how to fly.” Problem was, no one caught the error before the song’s release. Cole was mortified, but the song was so wildly popular, he waited a few years before making another recording. The original take is now a collector’s item. ■



CARBON-MONOXIDE DETECTORS save lives

Cold weather means a rise in carbon-monoxide (CO) poisonings. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that over 400 Americans die as a direct result of CO poisoning each year, and upwards of 50,000 are treated for CO injuries.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that is produced when fuels such as wood, coal, oil, propane, gasoline, and natural gas are burned. Household items and appliances that burn these fuels include furnaces, gas stoves, wood stoves, fireplaces, and portable generators, among others.

Appliance malfunctions, improper installation, and poor ventilation are some of the reasons for CO buildup. When inhaled, CO interferes with the blood’s ability to absorb oxygen, depriving the body’s cells of this critical element. The body begins to suffocate, despite the fact that the person is breathing normally.

In a sinister turn, symptoms of low-level CO exposure mimic those of the flu—headache, fatigue, nausea, and dizziness. Low-level exposure over an extended period of time can lead to serious injury or death. A person goes to bed thinking they’re under the weather and they never wake up. With high-level CO exposure, death can occur in minutes.

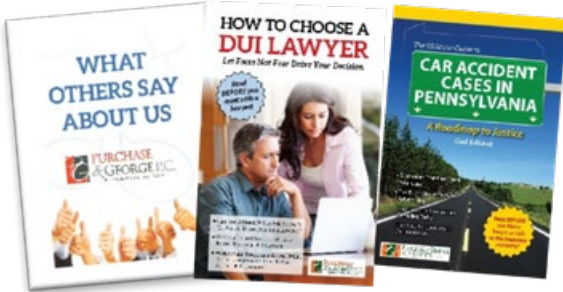
CO poisoning can cause enduring injuries such as short-term memory loss, amnesia, dementia, and other neurological disorders.

Building owners, landlords, and business owners have a duty to maintain a safe environment for those who visit, work, or live on the premises. Other parties who could share in liability for CO injuries include installation companies, maintenance companies, and product manufacturers. ■



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Holiday Wishes

As another year comes to a close, Purchase, George & Murphey wishes you a joyous and safe holiday season.

We are truly grateful to all of our clients who entrust us with their legal needs.

We also are grateful to you and the many lawyers who refer people to us.

May the New Year bring you peace and all good things.