



Potential Dangers of Autumn Leaves

Allison Hillaker

Pioneer State Mutual Insurance Company

Autumn leaves paint Michigan landscapes with beautiful, vibrant colors and beckon children to jump into their freshly raked piles. But, while the Fall can bring beauty and fun, leaves can cause dangerous situations both for your home and drive.

Leaf Build-Up in Your Gutters

As the leaves fall from the trees, they can land in your home's eavestroughs. If the leaves are left to pile up, they can block excess water from leaving your roof and can cause severe damage. A [Fox News article](#) reports "the problem with clogged gutters is more than just those annoying waterfalls that pour off the roof on rainy days, or the pretty icicles that hang around in the winter. This excess water wreaks havoc on the integrity of your home's structure. The gutter system of a house is designed to move water down from the roof and away from the home and it's foundation for proper drainage. Water that gets dammed up in the gutters finds the path of least resistance when it tries to drain and this often means it works right into the walls and ceilings of your house." Watch this Lowes Home Improvement Store YouTube Video to learn the easy way to clean out and repair your home's gutters before it causes significant damage to your home: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_9WJSzV6fw.

Slippery Roads

Leaves on the road accompanied with rain or dew can cause roads to become very slick. In an interview with [The Weather Channel](#), the Car Care Council advises "drivers should be aware that wet leaves on the road surface can make stopping difficult, and piles of leaves can obscure potholes, curbs and street markings... add to these hazards the fact that road conditions can change from ideal to miserable in a matter of minutes, and what you have is a potentially dangerous situation." In order to prevent a Fall leaf accident, drivers should ensure their tires, brakes and wipers are checked and should drive extra cautiously when the roads are slick.

Michigan Burning Laws

Burning leaves can not only be dangerous if sparks were to catch nearby dry grass on fire, it can also potentially be a health hazard. Because of this, the state and local government bodies have enacted laws surrounding leaf and grass clipping burning. [The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality](#) reports, "since 1995, solid waste regulations have prohibited the open burning of grass clippings and leaves in Michigan municipalities having a population of 7500 or more. Local governing bodies may enact an ordinance authorizing such open burning provided other regulations are not violated." The safest way to dispose of leaves is to gather them in lawn bags and dispose of them according to your local regulations.

For more safety tips and information from Pioneer State Mutual, visit our [Safety Tips](#) page.

