

JIF NEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Somerset County Joint Insurance Fund featuring Safety, Health & Wellness



April 2nd is National Walking Day

Follow these tips to stay safe as a pedestrian:

- Whenever possible, walk on the sidewalk; if no sidewalk is available, walk facing traffic
- Follow the rules of the road, obeying all traffic signs and signals
- Cross streets at crosswalks
- If no crosswalk is available and your view is blocked, move to a place where you can see oncoming traffic
- Look left, right and left again before crossing the street, making eye contact with drivers of oncoming vehicles to make sure they see you
- Stay alert – avoid cell phone use and wearing earbuds
- Avoid alcohol and drug impairment when walking
- Wear bright and/or reflective clothing, and use a flashlight at night
- Watch for cars entering or exiting driveways or backing up in parking lots
- Children younger than 10 should cross the street with an adult

Head Up, Phone Down

- Distracted walking incidents are on the rise, and everyone with a cell phone is at risk. We are losing focus on our surroundings and putting our safety at risk. The solution: Stop using phones while walking, and not just in crosswalks and intersections. Over half of distracted walking injuries occur in our own homes, proving that we need to stay aware of our surroundings indoors and out.

Pedestrian Safety Is a Shared Responsibility

When driving, help keep pedestrians of all ages safe:

- Obey all traffic laws, especially posted speed limits in school zones
- Watch for pedestrians at all times and be extra cautious when backing up
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, making eye contact to indicate that you see them
- Never pass vehicles stopped at crosswalks
- Stay alert – avoid distracted driving

6 Benefits of Walking 30 Minutes a Day



Healthy Heart



Reduce Stress



Burn Calories



Boost Your Mood



Better Sleep



Strengthens Joints



Staying Safe on Playgrounds | Check for Playground Hazards

Nearly 80% of playground injuries are caused by falls. Watch out for these potential hazards when taking kids to the playground, and report any hazards observed.

Improper ground surfaces: Surfaces around playground equipment should have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials. Playgrounds should be free of exposed concrete footings, rocks or tree stumps.

Overcrowded play areas: The area under and around play equipment should be a minimum of 6 feet in all directions while swing set areas

should be twice the height of the suspending bar both in back and front of the swings. Structures more than 30 inches high should be at least 9 feet apart.

Unprotected elevated areas: Platforms higher than 30 inches should have guardrails or barriers.

Head entrapment spaces: Openings between rails, bars, rungs and even ropes of cargo nets should be less than 3½ inches or more than 9 inches.

Sharp points and edges: Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, "S" hooks, and other sharp points and edges.

see link for a copy of CPSC Public Playground Safety Handbook

WORK ZONES SAFETY TIPS

On average, over 700 fatalities occur in work zones each year. Commercial motor vehicle (CMV) and passenger vehicle drivers both need to be particularly careful while traveling through work zones. Trucks and buses have limited maneuverability and large blind spots, both of which make operating in these areas more challenging for them. In fact, large trucks are disproportionately involved in work zone crashes.



For more information on work zone safety visit workzonesafety.org.

SLOW DOWN

Lane closures, traffic pattern shifts and reduced speeds are common in work zones. Make sure to slow down when entering a work zone and keep an eye out for road workers.



Stay safe while traveling through work zones with these tips:

RESEARCH YOUR ROUTE

Before setting out on the road, research your route. When possible, avoid work zones and use any detours that are available.

MOVE INTO THE OPEN LANE

When approaching lane closures, move into the open lane as soon as possible. Be sure to pay close attention to vehicles around you that could be in your blind spot.



PAY ATTENTIONS

You should always keep your eyes on the road, but this is exceptionally important in work zones. Be aware of all signage throughout work zones that can indicate reduced speeds, lane changes and other important information. Avoid distractions such as your cellphone, eating, drinking, the radio, GPS and conversing with other passengers.

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Rear-end crashes are extremely common in work zones – maintain extra space between your vehicle and the one in front of you at all times.



EXPLORE THE TOP 15 HIKING TRAILS IN NEW JERSEY!

From the Appalachian Trail to serene waterfalls, find your perfect hike with scenic views for all levels.

When thinking about New Jersey, you might think of its rich history, the sandy beaches, or maybe just their busy roads. But hidden behind the preconceptions of this stunning, beautiful state are thousands of square miles of incredible hiking opportunities.

Unbeknownst to most, the Appalachian Trail runs across the entire length of New Jersey, lending hikers access to flowing rivers, towering mountains, and lush green meadows that help New Jersey maintain its status of being, "The Garden State". Here is a guide to 15 of New Jersey's best and most unique hiking trails across the state.

Time To Plan Your Next New Jersey Hike.

Mount Tammany Trail

(Difficulty: Strenuous | Distance: 3.5)

The trailhead is located on the border of Pennsylvania and New Jersey along the Delaware River. To get there, from the nearest town of Stroudsburg, PA, drive east on I-80 E for 11.9 Miles in Hardwick Township. Take the exit towards Dunnfield Creek and the trailhead will be on the right.

Hemlock Falls

(Difficulty: Easy | Distance: 1.7 Miles)

From Newark, head west on I-280 W for 7.5 miles and use the left two lanes to turn onto Northfield Ave. Make a quick left onto Pleasant Valley Way and then an immediate slight left onto Cherry Lane. Continue for 1.3 miles and make a left on W S Orange Avenue. Drive for 0.5 miles and the trailhead will be on your right.

Torne Mountain and Osio Rock Loop

(Difficulty: Strenuous | Distance: 2.6 Miles)

From Morristown, drive N on I-287 N for 17.3 miles and take exit 53 onto County Road 694 and drive for 1.6 miles. From here, make a slight right onto Glenwild Ave and continue for another 3.2 miles and the trailhead parking area will be on your right.

Sunfish Pond via Appalachian Trail

(Difficulty: Moderate | Distance: 9.7 Miles)

From Byram Township, follow I-80 W for 24.1 miles until you reach Hardwick Township and take the exit towards Dunnfield Creek. After a quick slight right, the Dunnfield Natural Area will be on your right. The connection towards Sunfish Pond via the Appalachian Trail will be here.

Pochuck Boardwalk and Stairway to Heaven

(Difficulty: Moderate | Distance: 7.5 Miles)

From Hamburg, head east on NJ-94 N for 6.5 miles and turn left on McAfee Glenwood Road. After 1.7 miles, the trailhead for the Appalachian Trail Boardwalk, the trailhead for this hike, will be on your right.

Wyanokie High Point, Chikahoki Falls, and Otter Hole

(Difficulty: Strenuous | Distance: 6.6 Miles)

From Riverdale, head north on I-287 N for 1.7 miles and take exit 55 onto County Road 511. Continue for another 4.0 miles and turn left on Westbrook Road. Drive on Westbrook Road for 1.9 miles and after 0.3 miles, turn left onto Snake Den Road. After 0.3 miles, the parking area will be on your left.

Long Loop via Peanut Leap Cascade, Giant Stairs, and Closter Dock

(Difficulty: Moderate | Distance: 10.3 Miles)

From Northvale, drive north on Livingston St for 0.7 miles, crossing the state line into New York State. Stay on NY-303 for 1.3 miles before turning on Palisades Interstate Pkwy S. Re-enter into Jersey along Palisades Interstate Pkwy S for 4.6 miles and take the exit towards State Line Lookout, the parking area for this hike.

Grand Loop Trail at Morristown National Historical Park

(Difficulty: Moderate | Distance: 7.1 Miles)

From Morristown, drive southwest on Western Avenue for 2.0 miles. The road will become Jockey Hollow Road and continue for another 1.0 mile and the trailhead will be on your right.

Buttermilk Falls and Crater Lake Loop Trail

(Difficulty: Strenuous | Distance: 6.8 Miles)

From Branchville, head northwest on US-206 N for 3.8 miles and turn left onto Struble Road. Drive down Struble Road for 3.9 miles and turn right on Tilman Road. Drive for 1.0 miles and turn left on Brook Road. Continue for 2.0 miles and the trailhead for Buttermilk Falls will be on your right.

Cape May Point Trail

(Difficulty: Easy | Distance: 1.8 Miles)

From South Cape May, drive west on Sunset Boulevard for 1.7 miles and make a left on Light House Avenue. The entrance to Cape May Point State Park and parking lot for this hike are on your left.

Hacklebarney Loop Trail

(Difficulty: Moderate | Distance: 2.1 Miles)

From Washington Township, drive south on Fairmount Road for 1.6 miles and make a left onto E Valley Brook Road. After 0.4 miles, make a right on Old Farmers Road and take a right. Drive for 1.6 miles and Old Farmers Road will merge with Hacklebarney Road and continue driving for 0.7 miles. Turn right and you will be in the Hacklebarney Trail parking lot.

Burnt Meadow Loop

(Difficulty: Moderate | Distance: 2.9 Miles)

From West Milford, drive east on Marshall Hill Rd for 2.5 Miles and turn right on Burnt Meadow Road. Head south on Burnt Meadow for a short while until you find an unmarked turnout where the trail begins.

Terrace Pond North

(Difficulty: Moderate | Distance: 6.4 Miles)

From West Milford, head north on Union Valley Road and drive for 1.7 miles, and make a slight left onto Warwick Turnpike. Continue for 1.8 miles and make a slight right onto Clinton Road. Stay on Clinton Road for 1.7 miles and your trailhead will be on the right.

Split Rock Reservoir Loop

(Difficulty: Moderate | Distance: 11.6 Miles)

From Rockaway, drive north on Green Pond Road for 6.7 miles and make a right on Upper Hibernia Avenue. Continue for 1.0 miles and turn left on Split Rock Road. After 1.2 miles, you will find a small dirt lot off the side of the road. Try to get there early, as the lot is small and any parking along the road is illegal and will likely get ticketed.

Manaticut Point Trail

(Difficulty: Moderate | Distance: 4.5 Miles)

From West Milford, drive south on Morsetown Road for 3.4 miles and turn left on Westbrook Road. Stay on Westbrook Road for 2.4 miles and turn left onto Magee and then a near-immediate left onto Burnt Meadow Road. Continue for 1.0 miles and turn left onto Crescent Drive. After 0.2 miles, the trailhead will be on your right.