

Best-in-Class Thoughts

“Character is the ability to carry out a good resolution long after the excitement of the moment has passed.”

– Cavett Robert

“The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written. We can help write that story by setting goals.”

– Melody Beattie

“Every time you tear a leaf off a calendar, you present a new place for new ideas and progress.”

– Charles Kettering



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Note from Leanne

Happy New Year! I hope everyone took the opportunity to enjoy the recent holiday season, spend time with family and friends and take some time to relax and recharge. As we kick off 2015, we find ourselves with various outlooks on the New Year. Some of us will look back on 2014 and want to continue the success we experienced in various aspects of our lives, both personally and professionally. Some of us will reflect on 2014 and identify opportunities for improvement and ways that the year could have been better.

I encourage you to take the opportunity that each New Year provides and do both. Every New Year presents us with a clean slate, an opportunity for a fresh start where we can right the wrongs of the previous year and look forward to new success. Additionally, the New Year provides us with an opportunity to one-up our previous year; if you had a great 2014, look at 2015 as a chance to be even greater.

Here's to new beginnings and continued success in 2015!

2015 Kick-Off Webinar

Each January, MER's Health and Safety Team hosts a Health and Safety Kick-Off Webinar for all of our employees to wrap up the previous year and start the New Year on the right foot. During the 2015 Health and Safety Kick-Off Webinar, the MER Safety Team will present our 2015 safety goals and discuss our plan to achieve these goals; additionally, we'll introduce our 2015 Safety Program implementations and upgrades for the New Year and discuss how we'll use these tools to continue driving toward a Best-in-Class safety culture.

As we've done in years past, we'll also review our previous year's safety performance and discuss how our 2015 goals and implementations will address any opportunities for improvement we saw in last year's safety.

The Health and Safety Kick-Off Webinar will be held on Wednesday, January 14th. Due to the rapid growth of the MER Family of Companies, this year MER's Health and Safety Team will host four live webinars to accommodate the varying schedules of our employees throughout the companies. Current scheduled times are:

- ◆ 6:00am EST (3:00am PST)
- ◆ 9:00am EST (6:00am PST)
- ◆ 4:30pm EST (1:30pm PST)
- ◆ 7:30pm EST (4:30pm PST)

Vehicle Emergency Kit

- Shovel
- Windshield scraper & small broom
- Flashlight
- Battery powered radio
- Extra batteries
- Water
- Snack food
- Matches
- Extra hats, socks and mittens
- First aid kit with pocket knife
- Necessary medications
- Blanket(s)
- Tow chain or rope
- Road salt and sand
- Booster cables
- Emergency flares
- Fluorescent

Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

While the danger from winter weather varies across the country, nearly all Americans, regardless of where they live, are likely to face some type of severe winter weather at some point in their lives. Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.

One of the primary concerns is winter weather's ability to knock out heat, power and communications services to your home or office, sometimes for days at a time. Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region.

The National Weather Service refers to winter storms as the "Deceptive Killers" because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. Instead, people die in traffic accidents on icy roads and of hypothermia from prolonged exposure to cold. It is important to be prepared for winter weather before it strikes.

Before Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

To prepare for a winter storm you should do the following:

- * Add the following supplies to your emergency kit:
 - ◆ Rock salt or equivalent to melt ice on walkways. Visit: <http://www.epa.gov/dfepubs/projects/formulat/formpart.htm> for a complete list of recommended products.
 - ◆ Sand to improve traction.
 - ◆ Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.
 - ◆ Sufficient heating fuel if regular fuel sources are cut off. Store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood-burning stove.
 - ◆ Adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm.
- * Make a Family Communications Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- * A NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts alerts and warnings directly from the NWS for all hazards. You may also sign up in advance to receive notifications.
- * Know Your Alerts and Warnings. View a summary of notifications at: www.ready.gov/prepare. Additionally, free smart phone apps, such as those available from FEMA and the American Red Cross, provide information about finding shelters, providing first aid, and seeking assistance for recovery.
- * Minimize travel. If travel is necessary, keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle (see Emergency Vehicle Kit list above).
- * Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.



Winterize Your Vehicle

Check or have a mechanic check the following items:

- * Fuel and air filters - keep water out of the system by using additives and maintaining a full tank of gas. A full tank will keep the fuel line from freezing.
- * Oil - Heavier oils congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.
- * Tires - All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. However, some jurisdictions require that to drive on their roads, vehicles must be equipped with chains or snow tires with studs.
- * Antifreeze levels
- * Battery and ignition system
- * Brakes - wear & fluid levels
- * Exhaust system
- * Heater and defroster
- * Lights and flashing hazard lights
- * Thermostat
- * Windshield wiper equipment

<http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

There's an App for that!

**Flashlight
Noah Corp.**



If the power goes out, don't be left without a flashlight! This Flashlight app has an adjustable Brightness Controller, adjustable Strobe Rate, and an SOS Emergency Mode allowing you to send distress signals via morse code.

New Year, Healthier You

Top 10 Healthiest New Year's Resolutions

Each January, roughly one in three Americans resolve to better themselves in some way. A much smaller percentage of people actually make good on those resolutions. While about 75% of people stick to their goals for at least a week, less than half (46%) are still on target six months later, a 2002 study found. It may be hard to keep up the enthusiasm months after you've swept up the confetti, but it's not impossible. This year, pick one of the following worthy resolutions, and stick with it. Here's to your health!

1.) Lose Weight

The fact that this is repeatedly among the most popular resolutions suggests just how difficult it is to commit to. But you can succeed if you don't expect overnight success and have a support system. "You want results yesterday, and desperation mode kicks in," says Pam Peeke, MD, author of *Body for Life for Women*. "Around week four to six...people become excuse mills," Dr. Peeke says. "That's why it's important to have someone there on a regular basis to get you through those rough times."

2.) Stay in touch

Feel like old friends (or family) have fallen by the wayside? Reconnect with them. Research suggests people with strong social ties

live longer than those who don't. In fact, a lack of social bonds can damage your health as much as alcohol abuse and smoking, and even more than obesity and lack of exercise, a 2010 study in the journal *PLoS Medicine* suggests.

3.) Quit smoking

Fear that you've failed too many times to try again? Talk to any ex-smoker, and you'll see that multiple attempts are often the path to success. Try different methods to find out what works. And think of the cash you'll save!

4.) Save money

Save money by making healthy lifestyle changes like walking or riding your bike instead of driving, or taking stock of what's in the fridge and making a grocery list instead of shopping aimlessly at the supermarket.

5.) Cut your stress

A little pressure now and again won't kill us, but if stress is chronic, it can increase your risk of—or worsen—insomnia, depression, obesity, heart disease, and more. Long work hours, little sleep, no exercise, poor diet, and not spending time with family and friends can contribute to stress, says Roberta Lee, MD, an integrative medicine specialist at Beth Israel Medical Center, in NYC.



6.) Volunteer

We tend to think our own bliss relies on bettering ourselves, but our happiness also increases when we help others. A 2010 study found that people with positive emotions were about 20% less likely than their gloomier peers to have a heart attack or develop heart disease.

7.) Go back to school

Heading back to the classroom can help revamp your career, introduce you to new friends, and even boost your brainpower. A 2007 study found that middle-age adults who had gone back to school sometime in the previous quarter century had stronger memories and verbal skills than those who did not. Furthermore, several studies link higher educational attainment to a decreased risk of Alzheimer's disease.

8.) Cut back on alcohol

While much has been written about the health benefits of a small amount of alcohol, too much tipping is still the bigger problem. Drinking alcohol in excess affects the brain's neurotransmitters and can increase the risk of depression, memory loss, and seizures. Chronic heavy drinking boosts your risk of liver and heart disease, hypertension, stroke, mental deterioration, and cancers of the mouth, throat, liver, and breast.

9.) Get more sleep

You already know that a good night's rest can do wonders for your mood and appearance. But sleep is more beneficial to your health than you might realize. A lack of sleep has been linked to a greater risk of obesity and Type 2 diabetes. And sleep is crucial for strengthening memories.

10.) Travel

The rewards of vacations can last long after the suitcase is put away. "We can often get stuck in a rut, and we can't get out of our own way," Kanaris says. Traveling allows us to make changes in our lives without having to do anything too bold or dramatic making us feel rejuvenated and replenished.

<http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20452233,00.html>

Fitness Challenge

Challenge Your Friends!

Stay motivated by using ChallengeLoop to create or participate in fitness challenges with your friends!

1.) Create a challenge.

Challenge yourself or your friends. Offer a reward or make it just for fun.

2.) Make it epic.

Give the play by play with photos, videos, and comments. You know, things like action shots and the always exciting victory photo.

3.) Achieve your goal.

Share goals, track progress and have your friends root you on.

4.) Pick winner & settle up.

Remember to choose the winner and snap a victory photo!

www.ChallengeLoop.com

(iPhone App available)





MER Employees' Holiday Spirit

Values

Professionalism

Integrity

Mutual Respect

Discipline

Every day, almost every American is touched by a nonprofit organization in some way, whether it's a facility that treats a loved one, a community-based program, or a school our child attends. Nonprofits build vibrant and sustainable communities, advocate for widespread health and safety, celebrate and support arts and entertainment programs, and protect our planet for future generations.

This year, the MER Family of Companies' employees participated in several nonprofit and charitable events. On behalf of the MER Family of Companies, we thank our employees for their dedication to not just MER, but their local communities as well. Below are just a few examples of the events our employees participated in.

Coastal and Ocean Resources (CORI) created a gingerbread house entitled "Treasures of the Deep" for the National Gingerbread Showcase. All donations collected at the show will go to help Habitat for Humanity Victoria in their efforts to construct affordable homes for hard-working, lower income families.

Water Recovery LLC (WRI) understands the importance of contributing to those in need throughout the year, as well as during the holiday season. The team is honored to have made contributions to the Salvation Army, Celebration Church's "Home for the Holidays" program and the Angel Tree Program this holiday season.

The Newtown, CT Resource Center collected toys and donations for Toys for Tots, which prides itself on ensuring that 97% of donations go to their mission of providing toys, books and other gifts to less fortunate children.

The Jacksonville, FL Resource Center supported Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry's (BEAM) Toy Drive. BEAM's mission is to help families through emergencies and guide them to self sufficiency.



VICTORIA, B.C. - National Gingerbread Showcase. Treasures of the Deep by Margaret Minshall with CORI. <http://tinyurl.com/gingerbreadshowcase>

Kudos to all those who participated in charitable events this holiday season!



NEWTOWN, CT - Toys for Tots



Employee Development Corner

Employee Skills Assessment

In January, MER is hosting our 3rd Biannual Employee Skills Assessment exercise in an online format. Employee Skills Assessments are designed to gauge our employees' current level of comprehension as

well as identify opportunities for improvement and professional highlights within MER's Employee Development Program. Information collected from these Skills Assessments will help shape future MER training topics, as well as drive enhancements in MER SOPs and Health and Safety Programs. Information regarding the Skills Assessments will be available beginning Monday, January 5th. If any employee requires special arrangements to take their assessment, please contact Lauren LeGendre directly at 781-983-0108.

2015 Webinar Series

MER's Health and Safety Team will host several webinars throughout 2015 for all groups within the MER Family of Companies. Topics will include: Lead and Asbestos Awareness; Hazard Communications; Lockout/Tagout; Slips, Trips, and Falls; and more. To begin the series, MER will host our annual Health and Safety Kick-off on Wednesday, January 14th; for more information, check out the article on page 1 of this Issue (2015 Health and Safety Kick-Off Webinar).

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