



WINDSOR, CT
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THE FOUR SEASONS TIMES

FSL

Holiday 2011

Newsletter

Thank You for a Great 2011! Happy Holidays.

Mission Statement

Four Seasons "MAKES IT HAPPEN" as a result of being persistent and consistent to create and offer services that contribute to a more pleasant, trouble-free way of life to benefit our clients, staff, and our community.

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All Snow Services Companies are not created equal.
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In our industry, weather is always an important topic, and is a constant source of frustration, anticipation, and mixed emotions. In 2011 though, we brought weather to a new level completely. All I can say is "wow"!! Does anyone remember a year like this one? Not in my lifetime!

*By Bob St. Jacques,
C.S.P., C.L.P.
President
Four Seasons*

From the summer tornado, to the fall flooding, to our recent October snow disaster, it's been an interesting year - and in the spirit of continuous improvement, we've learned many lessons from our experiences. Our team has worked harder than ever to keep our clients serviced, and our 24/7 Emergency Phone (at 860.250.2960 - see article on page 2) was put to good use almost throughout the year. Our recent storm saw the FSL team transition in a 6 hour period from "landscape" mode to "winter/full snow operations". I would like to personally thank the entire FSL team, as well as our Partners and valued vendors, for their extra level of dedication this year, and for their tireless efforts. We worked to make sure our clients got the results they required all year, and we certainly appreciate your business in 2011. Without you, it wouldn't be possible!

In addition to saying "thank-you" in this issue, we also want to offer ideas and suggestions for snow/disaster preparedness, using our recent storm as a chance to improve and update "best practices" (see article on page 3). We also take a minute to highlight to you what a "CSP" (Certified Snow Professional) brings to your business - and why you should insist that your snow provider IS one. Preparedness is also the theme as we provide suggestions from the Small Business Administration on planning (page 3).

Thanks again for a great year, and Happy Holidays!

Bob

Happy Holidays
from the
Four Seasons Team



EMERGENCY SERVICES: FSL Responds to Client Needs 24/7/365

Throughout this past year, many Four Seasons clients found that our **Emergency Services** team helped them in a pinch. Since many of our clients often think of us as landscaping and snow removal specialists only, we thought we would shed some light on the fact that we offer many more services, and **we are available on an emergency basis 24/7/365.**

This past year, FSL assisted clients with such varied tasks as:

- **Rooftop snow clearing** (remember last winter?)
- **Pumping water** out of basements and commercial properties
- **Moving trees and debris** from the October storm (including the 1900 cubic yards we chipped, and 2400 cubic yards of debris we moved!)
- **Covering up retail properties' broken store front windows**
- using our **bucket loaders** for **mudslide cleanup**
- **Repairing parking lot failures**

As you can see, FSL helped clients with a wide variety of quick response emergency work when they needed assistance - fast. We can do the same for your business!

If your company should experience a catastrophic event, an ill-timed breakdown, or simply need us to solve a critical emergency as described above, **we can help.**

Our 24/7 Emergency phone is 860-250-2960.

Ways to Help Your Snow Services Company Help YOU - all Winter

By Andrew St. Jacques

"Be Prepared". The Boy Scouts seemed like they had it right when they put that phrase in every Scout Leader's handbook. Generally, it's great advice. The big question during this past October's storm was: How prepared were you? Because even some companies that normally get "A's" for preparedness found that they failed. Mother nature threw a very hard test our way, and in many cases, we hadn't studied!

COMMUNICATIONS

Until October, many companies thought that this was so basic that it shouldn't even be included in Snow Books. We found out the hard way that sometimes, communication isn't so basic - even with cell phones, as many of them failed to work in the aftermath of the storm. We suggest that clients include both a cell number **and** a backup number (like an old-fashioned land line) in their information, so your provider can reach you if there are important questions. We also recommend multiple contact names so if the first person on

the list can't be reached, then there are alternatives.

SITE PLANS

(See the enclosed site plan for an example). The drawings that identify the layout of properties are very important, especially if you want to avoid damage to sensitive areas, and need to keep equipment (and snow piles) away from hazards. Marking items like Oil Fill pipes, gas/electric/water service entrances will ensure that your snow services provider keeps them accessible.

DRAINS

Knowing where your drains are is critical to your snow services provider, so they definitely have to be marked! We've had over 60" of rain/liquid equivalent precipitation this year, and for that reason alone, keeping drains free of debris is absolutely critical. For the winter, this is especially true, as the snow melt needs to have a place to go, or else the refreeze can cause hazardous conditions, and potentially increase your company liability.

EQUIPMENT

Simple things like picnic tables, trash cans, and items that have been outdoors need to be moved and put into storage for the winter so snow can be moved efficiently.

DE-ICER STORAGE BOX

Your snow services provider should place a box with de-icer inside on-site for those situations that may arise prior to/after treatment.

STAKING

While it sounds simple, staking the boundaries that need attention will ensure that those areas get treated, and will prevent plowing and work on areas that don't.

COMMUNICATE

It may sound a bit odd, but you should be in touch with your snow services provider on a regular basis. Updates, changes in personnel, or just simple feedback - it's all helpful.

Remember :

Our 24/7 Emergency phone is 860-250-2960.




TIPS: Repair Damaged Landscapes and Be Ready for Winter

By Tim Garneau

Don't Wait. October's storm did a tremendous amount of damage to residential and commercial properties in the Northern tier of the state. If you haven't already, get outside your home (or call us for your commercial property) and take care of business:

Remove the damage. Most of us have probably removed dead limbs and branches, but have you "made the call"? Have you called a licensed arborist to evaluate the condition of the trees and shrubs on your property, and to determine where the next potential fall may come from? Highly recommended as critical preventive maintenance, and may save you much more \$\$ later.



Cut limbs at an angle. Sounds simple, right? Water needs a place to run off, and not sit where it can rot.

Uprooted Plants/Shrubs. As soon as possible, you should reset as close to original as you can, and should eliminate any air pockets in the root

structure. In addition, before the ground freezes, you should water heavily, and mulch to protect the root area.

Tip Summary

- **Get Moving!** Don't let the damage remain through winter!!
- **Take it Down.** The limbs and widow-makers need to be removed - for safety, peace of mind and aesthetics.
- **Stake-Guy-Save.** Wind Movement can kill young trees. Protect your investment and keep them safe.
- **Apply Fall Oils.** Evergreen leaves hate wind and cold. Keep them from drying over the winter.
- **Prepare your Lawn, too.** Slow release fertilizers can help your lawn stay fit over winter, and make it ready for that thick spring growth.

Apply Anti-Dessicant. This oil covering helps to keep green leafy plants from getting winter burn, which occurs from wind and lack of moisture (which the plants can't use due to frozen ground). Note: many experts suggest two treatments, one in late

fall in one again in January. Read the directions carefully for temperature requirements.

Staking and Guying. If you've replanted trees and want to ensure that movement from wind, etc, doesn't kill the replacement, this can be quite useful. When you do, support the tree low on the trunk. The purpose of staking or guying is to prevent movement of the lower trunk and root system. Movement of the top is desirable and will strengthen the tree.

Apply Slow Release Fertilizer to Lawn

The slow release, low nitrogen fertilizer you apply in the fall develops strong roots which enables the grass to over winter well. These fertilizers are stored in the root system over the winter and provide important nutrients for early spring growth.



Is Your Snow Svcs Provider a CSP?

A **Certified Snow Professional (CSP)** is an individual who has gone above and beyond the call of the snow and ice removal professional. CSP's have taken and passed SIMA's rigorous CSP test to become the only certified contractors in snow and ice management in North America.

What kind of a test do they have to pass?

The test encompasses 6 different learning modules:

- Business
- Human Resource Management
- Marketing
- Sub-Contractors
- Snow & Ice Science
- Snow & Ice Operations/Techniques

If you are looking for a snow and ice management service provider, CSP's should be at the top of your list.

For more information on these topics, go to www.sima.org, then click on "Property Owners/Managers" on the left side.

Courtesy: Snow and Ice Management Association

Disaster Recovery Lessons

 The U.S. Small Business Administration provides a list of suggestions for Disaster Preparedness. In the spirit of Continuous Improvement, we reprint a portion of them here:

- Determine what production machinery, computers and other essential equipment is needed to keep your business open. Store extra supplies offsite, and make a plan for a temporary location if your company is forced to relocate after the disaster. Be ready for utility disruptions with a portable generator.

- Find escape routes from the business and establish meeting places. Make sure everyone understands the emergency plan before the storm hits. Designate a contact person to communicate with other employees, customers and vendors.

- Make back-up copies of all tax, accounting, payroll and production records and customer data on computer hard drives, and store the records at an offsite location at least 100 miles away. Important documents should be saved in fireproof safe deposit boxes.

- Develop a post-disaster communications strategy. Keep current phone numbers for your suppliers, employees, customers, utility companies, local media, and emergency agencies. Appoint a spokesperson to get the word out that your company is still open and on the road to recovery, to dispel rumors of business failure.

More preparedness tips for businesses, homeowners and renters are available on the SBA's Web site at www.sba.gov/disaster_recov/prepared/getready.html. The Institute for Business and Home Safety (www.ibhs.org) also has information on protecting your home or business.



Happy Holidays
from the
Four Seasons Team



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HOW ABOUT \$100 - ON US?

Know the Answer?

Hint: Look Inside this Issue! Save and Win!!

1. CSP Stands for What?
2. Four Seasons has an Emergency Services team that is available:
a. 24/7/365 b. 12/5 c. winter only
3. How many Real Christmas Trees are sold in the U.S. every year (approximately)?
4. How Many cubic yards did FSL chip from the October storm?

Fax your answers to: 860.688.3856, and we'll select 1 winner (at random) from the correct answers.

Winner receives a \$100 gift certificate!

Christmas Tree Facts

- In 1856 Franklin Pierce, the 14th President of the United States, was the first President to place a Christmas tree in the White House.
- The first decorated Christmas tree was in Riga, Latvia in 1510.
- There are approximately 25-30 million Real Christmas Trees sold in the U.S. every year.
- In the first week, a tree in your home will consume as much as a quart of water per day.
- Christmas trees have been sold commercially in the United States since about 1850.
- Christmas trees take an average of 7-10 years to mature.
- The most common Christmas Tree species are: balsam fir, Douglas-fir, Fraser fir, noble fir, Scotch pine, Virginia pine and white pine.

Source/Courtesy: National Christmas Tree Assoc.