

news & notes

SAFETY ON THE ROAD

Impaired driving is an important issue year-round, but even more so during the holidays when many parties involve alcohol. In fact, **December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Month** to highlight the dangers of driving under the influence.

According to OSHA, alcohol use is involved in 40 percent of all fatal motor vehicle crashes. It is estimated that 3 in every 10 Americans will be involved in an impaired-driving-related crash some time in their lives. Alcohol involvement in vehicle crashes is highest at night, on weekends, and on holidays. Remember these sobering facts from the National Commission Against Drunk Driving:

- Three critical skills for safe driving are judgment, vision, and reflexes. Alcohol and drugs impair all three.
- Driving skills can become impaired well before you reach the legal blood alcohol limit.
- Alcohol can have a different effect each time you drink, depending on whether you've eaten, what you've eaten, your mood, your metabolism, how tired you are, and more.
- A 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and a 1½-ounce shot of liquor all have about the same amount of alcohol.
- The body eliminates alcohol at a rate of about one drink per hour.
- If you drink or take drugs and drive, you could be arrested for DWI. If convicted, you could lose your license. Worse, you could kill someone.



**Rudolph's nose + straw
= electrical fire hazard.**

EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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Happy and Safe Holidays

'Tis the season to follow precautions

The holiday season is here, and along with the decorations, shopping, and celebrations comes a heightened concern for safety. All the activities, partying, driving, and stress associated with the holiday season can increase the risk of accidents. Take holiday precautions to have a happy and safe holiday.

Safety on the Job

With all the busyness of the holidays, some workers might be distracted on the job with thoughts about holiday plans, and that could lead to carelessness and accidents. Others might not be getting as much sleep as usual, what with parties, shopping, and other after-work holiday activities.

This means people might come to work tired, or even a little hung over, and that could be dangerous. Guard against any of these situations happening to you.

Safety at Home

Home fires are a special problem this month because of decorations, candles, and other potential fire hazards. Don't let your home safety guard down this month when the decorations go up. Take these tips:

- Make sure all decorations are made of fire-resistant materials.
- Keep decorations and trees clear of sources of heat or flame such as radiators, fireplaces, and candles.
- Don't overload electrical outlets by inserting too many plugs into one outlet.
- Avoid lighted candles. Many holiday home fires are started by candles. If you do use them, place them far away from combustibles like curtains and in a place where they can't get knocked over. Never leave candles burning in an empty room.
- Keep natural Christmas trees moist—dry needles can catch fire. Trees need up to a gallon of water a day to keep fresh.
- Turn off holiday lights when you're not home.
- Don't use a fireplace without a metal screen or glass doors in place, and don't burn wrapping paper in the fireplace.
- Don't leave discarded gift wrap near a fireplace, candles, or heat sources.
- Use only UL-approved extension cords and lights.
- Don't run extension cords under rugs or staple them to the wall or floor—you could damage the insulation, expose the wires, and start a fire.
- Use lights and extension cords outdoors that are waterproof and approved for outdoor use.

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RESPONSIBLE PARTYING

Follow these tips:

- Decide who will be the designated driver.
- If you drink too much and don't have a designated driver, leave your car, get a ride, take a cab, or use public transportation.
- Never ride with someone who's been drinking.
- Know that the combined effect of alcohol and drugs impairs your driving ability more quickly and severely.

If you host a holiday party:

- Always serve food and have nonalcoholic drinks available.
- Stop serving alcohol and bring out coffee an hour before the party ends.
- Don't let guests drive if they've over-indulged.
- Never serve alcohol to someone under the age of 21.

DECORATING DON'TS

- No decorations made of flammable or combustible materials
- No electric lights on metallic trees
- No decorations blocking emergency exits and signs, fire alarms, extinguishers, and sprinklers
- No decorations in stairwells or fire exit corridors
- No lighted candles
- No stapling of light cords to the wall
- No cords in aisles, dangling over partitions or from desks, or anywhere they could be pulled or tripped over
- No holiday lights left on overnight or on weekends

Evacuation Exercise

Be prepared

Read these general procedures and fill in the information. Keep it posted nearby.

- Be familiar with emergency alarms.
- Know who to call in an emergency (list name and number):
– Emergency contact: _____
- Know locations of building diagrams showing exits.
- In addition, know locations of:
– First-aid supplies: _____
– Fire extinguishers: _____
- Alert others to evacuate.
- Shut down systems as instructed.
- Close doors and windows as instructed.
- Evacuate by assigned route. Describe route:

- Do not stop to get coats or personal items.
- Assemble immediately at assigned location. List location and contact's name:
– Location: _____
– Contact: _____
- Additional emergency procedures:

Slippery Surfaces

Be careful out there—and in here

Slipping and sliding means accidents and injuries. And even though it's winter, unless you're ice skating or skiing, you don't want to be slipping and sliding—especially around your workplace.

Weather-related slips and falls become a serious hazard as winter conditions often make for wet or icy surfaces outdoors. Even wet leaves or mud can create treacherous walking conditions. And wet shoes and clothes can leave a slippery trail indoors, too, that can also lead to slips and falls.

Take these precautions to prevent falls and possible injuries:

- **Wear appropriate footwear** with nonslip soles on wet, icy, or snowy days.
- **Take extra care when walking on wet, icy, or snow-covered walkways.** Walk slowly and slide your feet on slippery surfaces. Avoid turning sharply when you walk on a slippery surface.
- **Hold onto the railing** when using outdoor stairways.
- **Be especially careful when carrying packages,** equipment, materials, etc.
- **Wipe your feet when entering a building** so that your wet soles won't cause you to slip on indoor flooring.
- **If you slip and start to fall, limit your injuries** by bending your elbows and knees and using your legs and arms to absorb the fall. Or roll into the fall, if that's more appropriate.

