



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 52 - December 23 – December 27

Holiday Safety

Winter holidays are right around the corner which means a nice break with friends and family is coming up! However, with the holidays come stress, distractions, and safety concerns.

During the holidays, we are distracted more than usual with festive activities such as planning dinners, purchasing gifts, hosting out-of-town family, and holiday road trips. With that being said, the holidays also can bring on additional stress that pose health and safety risks as well.

This week we will give some pointers on how to manage holiday stress and will remind everyone about decoration and ladder safety tips. We will also discuss how to prepare for wintry driving conditions and parking lot safety while traveling or shopping.

Monday – Managing Holiday Stress

Holidays are a fun and exciting time but the additional stress they bring can really take a toll on your mental and physical health. People are more likely to catch an illness during this time of the year due to the cold weather and abundance of germs. Additionally, the likelihood of being involved in a workplace incident also increases due to high stress levels and end of year deadlines.

Here are a few simple ways you can manage holiday stress and stay safe this season:

- **Form a sleep schedule.** Going to sleep and waking up at the same time each day can help you manage your day better. Sticking to a normal sleep schedule will help you feel energized and ready to take on the day.
- **Plan your meals.** During the holidays, it's easy to reach for the Christmas treats and breakroom snacks. Preparing your meals beforehand can help keep your nutrition in check and make your day a bit more organized.
- **Make a plan for what you need to get done.** Planning can help you feel less stressed and more on top of things! If you have parties or trips coming up, plan for them in advance. Also, try to slowly chip away at that Christmas list. Don't wait until the last minute to get these tasks completed as that can add unneeded stress to the holidays.
- **Take it easy.** Remember, it's okay to take a break. Don't overwork yourself trying to get everything done in one day. The holidays are all about relaxing with those you care for the most, not working yourself into the ground.

Tuesday - Decoration & Ladder Safety

'Tis the season for decorations! It is a tradition to decorate for the holidays at home and at work. While decorating can help make the atmosphere more cheerful, there are some dangers you need to watch out for. Many times, ladders are used to help you decorate high ceilings, roof tops, and Christmas trees. Most injuries that result from ladder use are due to falls and the majority are preventable.



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Follow these safety tips to help prevent any disasters as you get into the holiday spirit:

Decorate Safely:

- Keep decorations away from heat sources. The tree may look beautiful next to the fireplace but it's safer to keep a distance between them.
- Don't link more than three strands of lights together. Overloading outlets and extension cords can lead to fires.
- Remember to unplug all decorations as you leave the house or go to sleep.
- If you choose to buy a real tree, don't forget to refill its water often.
- Lastly, always use nonflammable decorations on your trees!

Ladder Safety:

- Inspect your ladder before use. If you notice any rusty or loose parts, do not use the ladder.
- Once you've determined the ladder is safe for use, place it on a firm level surface and make sure it is stable before use.
- Always remember to keep three points of contact and, if possible, have another person help you while you use the ladder.

Wednesday – Wintry Driving Conditions

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), Christmas and New Years are among the most dangerous holidays for drivers. This is due to the increase of drivers on the road, urgency to reach a destination, and the poor driving conditions that winter brings.

Protect your family and vehicle this holiday season with these tips:

- **Check the weather before you travel.** If you plan to travel when inclement weather looms, monitor road conditions and sign up to receive weather alerts on your phone. Take the time to clean off any snow or ice from your vehicle before you start your drive.
- **Make an emergency road kit.** This kit should include water, phone chargers, jumper cables, first aid supplies, jumper cables, small shovels, extra clothes, flashlights with batteries, and ice and snow scrapers. You never know when you may need these supplies.
- **Plan ahead.** If you're traveling, map your routes in advance and prepare for traffic. Always remember to keep your insurance policy and roadside assistance information readily available in case you need it.



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Thursday – Parking Lot Safety

Distraction and parking lots are not a very good combination. Parking lots can become dangerous when the holiday season is in full effect. Many times, people are distracted and in a rush to get home after holiday shopping. Due to limited visibility due to inclement weather, many accidents occur in parking lots throughout the holiday season.

You can avoid becoming a victim of a parking lot incident by following some of these tips:

- **Put your phone and headphones away.** Using your phone, watching a video, or listening to music while walking through a busy parking lot can distract you.
- **Stay aware of your surroundings.** Watch for cars and always walk to the sides of the aisles.
- **Obey speed limits and follow lane designations.** Never cut diagonally across the lot and do not speed.
- **Make sure drivers can see you.** When walking in parking lots, always make eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them. Stop if the driver hasn't seen you.

Friday – Caring and Working Together

The third module from our **SafetyFirst** program talks about how employees should identify their own risks and also watch out for their coworkers.

From now until the New Year, you may notice that some of your coworkers seem a little distracted. If you witness distracted and unsafe working, have a conversation with that individual to regroup, stand down, and refocus with eyes and mind on task.