



SAFETY TALKS



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The Environmental Health & Safety Office

Holiday Season Safety from the National Safety Council

The National Safety Council offers these suggestions to help make your holiday season merry and safe.

Fireplaces

You should not try to burn evergreens or wreaths in the fireplace or in a wood stove to dispose of them. They are likely to flare out of control and send flames and smoke into the room. Also, do not burn wrapping paper in the fireplace because it often contains metallic materials, which can be toxic if burned.

Candles

Never use lighted candles near trees, boughs, curtains/drapes, or with any potentially flammable item.

Toys and Gifts

Be especially careful when you choose toys for infants or small children. Be sure anything you give them is too big to get caught in the throat, nose or ears. Avoid toys with small parts that can be pulled or broken off. If you are giving toys to several children in one family, consider their age differences and the chances that younger children will want to play with older kids' toys.

Plants

Small children may think that holiday plants look good enough to eat. But many plants can cause severe stomach problems. Plants to watch out for include: mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry, and amaryllis. Keep all of these plants out of children's reach.

Food and Cooking

The holidays often mean preparing large meals for family and friends. Wash hands, utensils, sink, and anything else that has come in contact with raw poultry. Keep in mind that a stuffed bird takes longer to cook. For questions concerning holiday turkey preparation and cooking call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers in covered shallow containers (less than two inches deep) within two hours after cooking. Date the leftovers for future use.

Alcohol, Parties and Driving

Being a smart party host or guest should include being sensible about alcoholic drinks. More than half of all traffic fatalities are alcohol-related. Use designated drivers, people who do not drink, to drive other guests home after a holiday party.

Stress

The holiday season is one of the most stressful times of the year. You can't avoid stress completely, but you can give yourself some relief. Allow enough time to shop rather than hurry through stores and parking lots. Only plan to do a reasonable number of errands. When shopping, make several trips out to the car to drop off packages rather than trying to carry too many items. Take time out for yourself. Relax, read, or enjoy your favorite hobby at your own pace.



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We're also on the web:

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(Source: [National Safety Council Fact Sheet Library](#))

Stay safe in cold weather

Dress appropriately before going outdoors. The air temperature does not have to be below freezing for someone to experience cold emergencies such as hypothermia and frostbite. Wind speed can create dangerously cold conditions even when the temperature is not that low.

- Dress in layers so you can adjust to changing conditions. Avoid overdressing or overexertion that can lead to heat illness.
- Most of your body heat is lost through your head so wear a hat, preferably one that covers your ears.
- Mittens provide more warmth to your hands than gloves.
- Wear waterproof, insulated boots to help avoid hypothermia or frostbite by keeping your feet warm and dry and to maintain your footing in ice and snow.
- Get out of wet clothes immediately and warm the core body temperature with a blanket or warm fluids like hot cider or soup.
- Avoid drinking caffeine or alcohol if you expect you or someone you are trying to help has hypothermia or frostbite.

**Happy Holidays
and have a
safe Winter Break.**



**From all of us at the
Environmental Health &
Safety Office.**

Safety Talks

Winter Walking & Driving Safety

Walking Safety Tips:

- Clear walkways and porches of snow and ice.
- Sprinkle salt, sand or kitty litter on walking areas to avoid slipping.
- When walking, step firmly and bend your knees. Take smaller steps.
- Mop up water or snow tracked into entryways and hallways from outdoors. Puddles of water can be hard to see and may cause you to slip.
- Don't wear a hat or scarf that blocks your vision or makes it hard for you to hear traffic.
- Don't get in a hurry. Falls most often occur when you're walking faster than usual.
- Use your common sense when deciding where to walk in the winter.

Car Safety Tips:

- Check anti-freeze and wiper fluid before getting on the road.
- Keep sand, salt or kitty litter in the trunk in case you get stuck.
- Keep a shovel, flashlight, jumper cables and a can of pressurized flat-repair aerosol in the car at all times.
- Drive slowly and plan extra time to reach your destination. Carpool whenever possible.
- Store non-perishable snacks and an old blanket in the trunk in case you are stranded.

5 minute meeting starters: Carbon Monoxide

Widespread use of gasoline-powered equipment in sheltered or confined spaces leads to scores of deaths from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning each year. Because CO is colorless, tasteless, odorless and non-irritating, it can strike with no warning, even in areas that appear to be safely ventilated.

Equipment most often involved in CO-poisoning accidents includes generators, water pumps, compressors and power washers. Even when used outdoors, gasoline engines have caused fatalities when carelessly placed near the air intake of buildings.

Safety Trained?

You should do a periodic audit to make sure you know what gasoline-powered equipment you have and whether workers using it are safely trained.

Workers should always:

- Be alert to warning symptoms of CO exposure. These include headache, dizziness, nausea, staggering, muscle aches and confusion.
 - Immediately turn off equipment and get outdoors if symptoms occur.
 - Call 911, or another emergency number should symptoms occur.
 - Stay away from work area until CO level have been measured and determined to be safe.
- (Source: Safety for Supervisors, 4/06/2004)

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