

Workplace Safety in the Holiday Season

~Environmental Health & Safety: University of Washington

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As the end of the year quickly approaches, we are often preoccupied with holiday planning, year-end deadlines and work commitments. As a result, many employers see an increase in workplace injuries just before and after the holiday season.

Be mindful while working.

Eliminate as many distractions as possible:

- Plan enough time to complete your tasks or research experiments safely.
- Avoid rushing.

These tips are particularly important when working with hazardous materials, sharp devices and powered equipment.

Walk safely through campus.

Slips, trips, and falls continue to be one of the most common causes of accidents reported.

- Wear shoes with good traction.
- Be cautious, especially on wet surfaces and stairs, and use handrails.
- Allow plenty of time to reach your destination.
- Avoid using mobile devices while walking.

Manage your stress level.

The holidays can be a stressful time. Minimize stress by:

- Reaching out for support
- Making time for yourself
- Being aware and mindful during your daily activities
- Exercising
- Practicing healthy eating and sleeping habits

Wash your hands.

With colder weather, we are more inclined to stay indoors. And with more people in shared spaces, washing your hands can help you avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Wash your hands with soap and clean running water for at least 20 seconds.

Drive safely.

Prepare your car before the cold weather hits by checking your tire tread, antifreeze levels, and radiator. Keep supplies in your car in case you become stranded while driving.

Allow more time for travel than you would during good weather. Drive slowly and cautiously and be aware of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Take care when decorating.

Whether you are hanging decorations in your home or workplace, prevent injuries by using step stools or the appropriate ladder. Never climb or stand on furniture. If hanging lights or electronic decorations, keep cords out of the way to prevent slip and trip injuries.

Information used for this article and more holiday health and safety tips are available at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Holiday Health and Safety Tips website.

We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday!