

December 2023

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## Holiday Safety

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# Supervising Safety Newsletter

The holidays are here, along with a host of holiday hazards. During this time of year, we fill our homes and office spaces with flammables, we walk and climb on icy surfaces, and we travel long distances in bad weather, which can leave the best of us feeling stressed and overwhelmed. The following are 12 common safety hazards and ways to avoid them during the holidays.

### 1. Heavy Lifting

- Fifty-two percent of lower back injuries occur during the holidays from lifting heavy objects, such as bulky gifts and Christmas trees. Many people also tend to take time off or work alone during the holidays. Don't risk getting a back injury during the holidays doing a job by yourself. When working alone, use proper lifting techniques. If the load is too heavy, ask for help.

### 2. Driving

- Thirty-eight percent of fatal crashes and fifty-two percent of fatalities involve someone not wearing a seatbelt.
- Prepare for winter weather driving. Pack road side kits, blankets, small shovels, and other items you may need in an emergency.
- Put distractions away while driving.

### 3. Sharp Tools

- Fifty-six percent of lacerations are caused by using the wrong tool for the job. Always select and use the right tool for the job. Tools should be inspected regularly and in good repair.
- Wrapping packages and cleaning up broken ornaments also top the list of holiday lacerations.

### 4. Christmas Trees

- Trees are heavy and difficult to maneuver, often tip or fall over, and have a tendency to catch fire easily. Some trees may have mold growing in them that can cause allergies and other health issues.
- Keep trees away from heat sources (3' in all directions).
- Water trees frequently.
- Throw trees out when the needles begin to fall.

### 5. Slips, Trips, and Falls

- Watch out for slippery surfaces, accumulated ice, and uneven surfaces covered by snow.
- Roll up extension cords or route them safely out of high traffic zones.
- Keep walkways clear and free of clutter and debris.

### 6. Falls From Heights

- Decorating our homes comes with special hazards that many people are just not prepared for.
- Over 5,000 people fall annually while decorating, with 43% being from ladders. Men are 40% more likely to be injured than women.
- Always use the right tool for the job. Never use chairs, buckets, or your best friend to work at heights when a ladder or step stool should be used.
- Always maintain 3-points of contact when using a ladder.

### 7. Christmas Lights and Extension Cords

- Over 700 people are injured during the holidays from using worn out Christmas lights and extension cords.
- Inspect cords and lights for broken sockets, cracks, or frayed wires. When hanging lights or working outdoors, select only outdoor rated cords and lights. Get rid of lights and cords when they are worn out.
- Be cautious not to overload electrical outlets.

### 8. Flammables

- Lighting candles, a fire in the hearth, cooking, and a decorated Christmas tree are all flammables we freely bring into our homes.
- Stay safe by keeping flammables and heat sources separate.
- Blow out the candles when not attended.
- Turn off Christmas lights and other decorations when you go to bed.
- Be sure to have a fire extinguisher on hand and know how to use it.
- Check the batteries and test carbon monoxide alarms and smoke detectors.

### 9. Food Poisoning

- Food is a holiday tradition at home and at work. Always prepare food safely. This includes cooking thoroughly, refrigerating, and storing leftovers.
- Food should be stored at temperatures below 39 degrees Fahrenheit. Avoid storing foods in temperatures over 40 degrees where bacteria can grow rapidly.
- When in doubt, throw it out.

### 10. Alcohol Consumption

- Don't let the holidays be ruined by overindulging in holiday spirits.
- Set a limit on how many drinks to have.
- Always have a designated driver.

### 11. Colds and other Illnesses

- Try not to include viruses on the guest list at your next gathering. Spread Christmas cheer this season, not viruses.
- Wear a mask when needed.
- Wash your hands often.
- Consider getting a pre-Christmas flu vaccine (available in the clinic).

### 12. Shopping Mishaps

- Avoid crowds by shopping during less busy hours or shop online. A good way to reduce holiday stress is to shop early for everyone on your list.
- When shopping in the crowds, be patient and considerate of others.

Put safety at the top of your wish list this holiday season. Thanks for working safely and making IPSC a great place to work.

