

SHOVELING SNOW

Shoveling snow can be a strenuous activity, particularly because cold weather can be taxing on the body. There is a potential for exhaustion, dehydration, back injuries, or heart attacks. During snow removal in addition to following the tips for avoiding cold stress, such as taking frequent breaks in warm areas, there are other precautions workers can take to avoid injuries. Workers should warm-up before the activity, scoop small amounts of snow at a time and where possible, push the snow instead of lifting it. The use of proper lifting technique is necessary to avoid back and other injuries when shoveling snow: keep the back straight, lift with the legs and do not turn or twist the body. Always dress appropriately.

USING POWERED EQUIPMENT LIKE SNOW BLOWERS

It is important to make sure that powered equipment, such as snow blowers are properly grounded to protect workers from electric shocks or electrocutions. When performing maintenance or cleaning, make sure the equipment is properly guarded and is disconnected from power sources.

Snow blowers commonly cause lacerations or amputations when operators attempt to clear jams with the equipment turned on. Never attempt to clear a jam by hand. First, turn the snow blower off and wait for all moving parts to stop, and then use a long stick to clear wet snow or debris from the machine. Keep your hands and feet away from moving parts. Refuel a snow blower prior to starting the machine; do not add fuel when the equipment is running or when the engine is hot.



“Did I hear you right? You want an educational toy?”

HOLIDAY RIDDLES

- 1) Why is Santa so good at karate?
- 2) How do you know when Santa is in the room?
- 3) Where do mistletoe go to become famous?
- 4) Why do Mummies like presents so much?
- 5) Where does a snowman keep his money?
- 6) Which of Santa's reindeer needs to mind its manners the most?
- 7) What do you have in December that you don't have in any other month?
- 8) Spell 'hard water' with three letters.

Answers on Page 2 Safety Bits and Pieces

Safety Matters



Produced by the Insurance Coverage Office

State of Delaware

Issue CXLVIII

December 2018

ENJOY A SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON

Please consider these basic precautions from the National Safety Council to ensure your family remains safe and injury-free throughout the holiday season.

Traveling for the Holidays? Be Prepared

Many people choose to travel during the holidays by automobile, with the highest fatality rate of any major form of transportation. In 2015, 355 people died on New Year's Day, 386 on Thanksgiving Day and 273 on Christmas Day, according to *Injury Facts 2017*. Alcohol-impaired fatalities represent about one-third of the totals.

- Use a designated driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party; alcohol, over-the-counter or illegal drugs all cause impairment
- Make sure every person in the vehicle is properly buckled up no matter how long or short the distance traveled
- Put that cell phone away; many distractions can occur while driving, but cell phones are the main culprit
- Properly maintain the vehicle and keep an emergency kit with you
- Be prepared for heavy traffic, inclement weather of all kinds (snow, sleet, rain, freezing rain, and so forth) and frequently changing weather conditions

Watch Those Decorations - Even Angel Hair can Hurt

Decorating is one of the best ways to get in a holiday mood, but emergency rooms see thousands of injuries involving holiday decorating every season.

- "Angel hair," made from spun glass, can irritate your eyes and skin; always wear gloves or substitute non-flammable cotton
- Spraying artificial snow can irritate your lungs if inhaled; follow directions carefully
- Decorate the tree with your kids and pets in mind; move ornaments that are breakable or have metal hooks toward the top
- Always use the proper step ladder; don't stand on chairs or other furniture and inspect all ladders before use
- Lights are among the best parts of holiday decorating; make sure there are no exposed or frayed wires, loose connections or broken sockets, and don't overload your electrical circuits
- Plants can spruce up your holiday decorating, but keep those that may be poisonous (including some Poinsettias) out of reach of children or pets; the national Poison Control Center can be reached at (800) 222-1222
- Make sure paths are clear so no one trips on wrapping paper, decorations, toys, etc.

Watch Out for Fire-starters

Thousands of deaths are caused by fires, burns and other fire-related injuries every year, and 12% of home candle fires occur in December, the National Fire Protection Association reports. Increased use of candles and fireplaces, combined with an increase in the amount of combustible, seasonal decorations present in many homes means more risk for fire.

- Never leave burning candles unattended or sleep in a room with a lit candle
- Keep candles out of reach of children
- Make sure candles are on stable surfaces
- Don't burn candles near trees, curtains or any other flammable items
- Don't burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace
- Check and clean the chimney and fireplace area at least once a year

Turkey Fryers

While many subscribe to the theory any fried food is good – even if it's not necessarily good for you – there is reason to be on alert if you're thinking of celebrating the holidays by frying a turkey.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports there have been 168 turkey-fryer related fires, burns, explosions or carbon monoxide poisoning incidents since 2002. CPSC says 672 people have been injured and \$8 million in property damage losses have resulted from these incidents.

The National Safety Council discourages the use of turkey fryers at home and urges those who prefer fried turkey to seek out professional establishments or a new oil-less fryer.

Safety Bits and Pieces

STRANDED IN A VEHICLE

If you are stranded in a vehicle, stay in the vehicle. Call for emergency assistance if needed, response time may be slow in severe winter weather conditions. If working, notify your supervisor of your situation. Do not leave the vehicle to search for assistance unless help is visible within 100 yards. You may become disoriented and get lost in blowing and drifting snow. Display a trouble sign by hanging a brightly colored cloth on the vehicle's radio antenna and raising the hood. Turn on the vehicle's engine for about 10 minutes each hour and run the heat to keep warm. Also, turn on the vehicle's dome light when the vehicle is running as an additional signal. Beware of carbon monoxide poisoning. Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow, and open a downwind window slightly for ventilation.



Watch for signs of *frostbite* and *hypothermia*. Do minor exercises to maintain good blood circulation in your body. Clap hands and move arms and legs occasionally. Try not to stay in one position for too long. Stay awake, you will be less vulnerable to cold-related health problems. Use blankets, newspapers, maps, and even the removable car mats for added insulation. Avoid overexertion since cold weather puts an added strain on the heart. Unaccustomed exercise such as shoveling snow or pushing a vehicle can bring on a heart attack or make other medical conditions worse.

HOLIDAY RIDDLES ANSWERS

- 1) Because he has a black belt!
- 2) You can sense his presents.
 - 3) "Holly" wood.
- 4) Because of all the wrapping.
 - 5) In a snow bank!
- 6) Rude -olf (Rudolph)!
- 7) The letter "D"
- 8) I - C - E

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE



"I've been good this year, so I don't think I'll be getting any 'It's the thought that counts' gifts."

TEN TIPS FOR SAFE HOLIDAY DECORATING

Seasonal decorations, including lights, trees and wreaths, can help put your household in the holiday spirit. However, when not used properly, decorations—particularly lights—can create safety hazards or cause fires.

Keep your family safe during the holidays. Prior to use, read the manufacturer's instructions for each item to understand how to use it properly. In addition, follow these best practices to ensure your holiday lights and decorations are installed correctly:

1. Double check lights for frayed wires or cracks, and be sure there is a bulb in each socket. Discard and replace damaged strands.
2. When decorating outside, keep ladders and decorations away from overhead power lines. Ensure the ladder is securely placed on the ground before climbing.
3. Lights should be approved by Underwriters Laboratory. "UL" will be clearly displayed on the tag, signifying the product has been inspected for potential safety hazards. Red UL marks indicate the lights are safe for indoor/outdoor use, and green UL marks indicate the lights are only safe for indoor use.
4. Do not hammer tacks or nails into the electrical cord when hanging lights. Instead, use clips to safely attach lights to the house.
5. Use heavy-duty extension cords, and only use cords outdoors if they are designated for outdoor use. Avoid overloading extension cords by using no more than three sets of standard lights per cord.
6. If possible, outdoor lights and inflatable decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI). GFCIs help prevent electric shock by breaking the circuit when differences in the currents of hot and neutral wires occur.
7. Use a timer or turn off lights before going to bed, or if you will be away from home.
8. For special ornaments that plug into a bulb receptacle, use no more than two per strand, or check the manufacturer's directions.
9. Indoor lights should not touch drapes, furniture or carpeting. Keep lit candles away from flammable items, too.
10. Prevent tripping by placing cords and decorations in low-traffic areas where they won't be walked on. Avoid twisting, kinking or crushing cords.



Additionally, if you have children in your home, use safety caps on all electrical outlets that are not in use to prevent shock. Keep sharp objects out of reach, as well as items that could be swallowed.

By taking the proper precautions both inside and outside of your home, you can prevent hazards and focus on friends and family during the holidays. Don't forget to periodically check lights and decorations throughout the season to ensure they continue to operate safely.

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

To prevent slips on snow and ice remember the following safety tips:

- Try to walk where the snow and ice have been removed and ice melt/deicer has been applied.
- Wear proper footwear, such as a pair of insulated and water resistant boots with good rubber treads. Keeping a pair of rubber over-shoes with good treads which fit over your street shoes is a good idea during winter months. Investing in a pair of winter walking cleats, which can be purchased online or in some retailers, is also a good idea.
- Take short baby steps and walk at a slower pace so you can react quickly to a change in traction when walking on an icy or snow-covered walkway.
 - If you find yourself falling, commit to it, try to relax and make it safe by remembering the following:
 - Bend your knees. It instantly reduces the distance of your fall.
 - Don't use your arms to catch yourself. Instead, cross your arms over your chest or keep them away from your body, so that they won't be crushed by the weight of the fall.
 - If you can, try to fall on the side of your body.
 - Most importantly, protect your head! Tuck your chin to your chest to help prevent your head from hitting the ground!

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"The family is the test of freedom; because the family is the only thing that the free man makes for himself and by himself."
Gilbert K. Chesterton (1874 - 1936) Writer

