

## SAFETY NEWSLETTER

SELF INSURED WORKER'S COMPENSATION FUND MEMBERS

December 2018

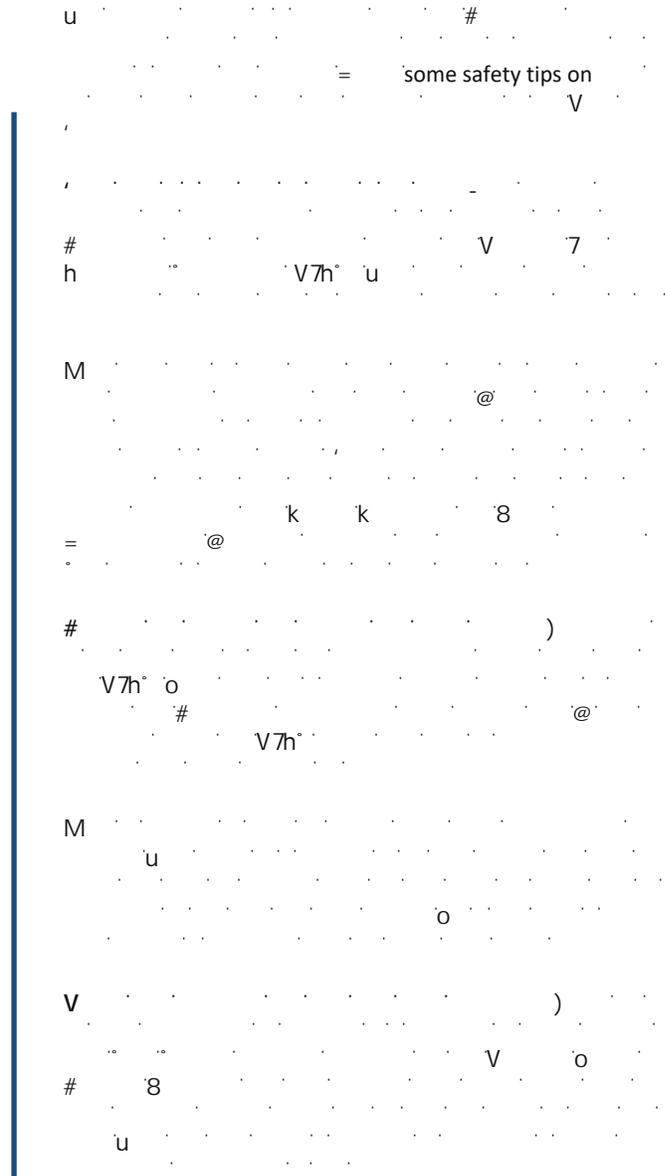
### Holiday/Christmas Safety Tips for Home and Work



#### The 12 Days of Christmas Safety Tips for around the House:

##### The 12 Days of Christmas Safety

- 1) Clean your chimney. Dirty chimneys can cause chimney fires.
- 2) Make sure your outdoor lights are meant for outdoor use. Follow labeling for number of light sets which can be connected end-to-end. Discard any string of lights with frayed cords, cracked lamp holders or loose connections. **Pro tip:** Turn off the electricity to the supply outlet before working on outdoor wiring.
- 3) Use safe ladder practices when hanging lights.
- 4) Be careful when getting decorations out of a low attic. Watch for exposed nails, wires, low-hanging rafters or cross-beams. In addition, openings between truss chords can present a fall hazard.
- 5) Turn off all indoor and outdoor lights before you go to bed.
- 6) Place candles on steady, non-flammable surfaces and away from curtains and other flammable items. Keep them out of reach of children and pets. Blow candles out when you leave the room.
- 7) Always have a working fire extinguisher in the house and keep it easily accessible. **Pro tip:** Install working smoke alarms on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area. With so much holiday cheer, don't get distracted and leave cooking food unattended.
- 8) Keep trees away from heat sources like radiators and fireplaces. **Pro tip:** Before setting up the tree inside, trim two inches off the stem diagonally so it can absorb water. Add water each day to ensure the tree is well watered.
- 9) Do not overload electrical circuits or extension cords.
- 10) Always turn Christmas lights out before leaving home or going to sleep.
- 11) **Pro tip:** Purchase lights that have a label from a recognized testing laboratory, and follow instructions on cord labels regarding connecting lights strings and extension cords.
- 12) Keep sidewalks & steps shoveled and de-iced to prevent slips and falls.



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## Don't be sloppy with broken ornaments.

Known for your butter fingers? If you drop a glass ornament and it breaks, pick up the big pieces and wrap them in newspaper or a paper towel before throwing them in the garbage, says Forte. "You can use a moist piece of white bread to pick up the little shards," she adds. Then, sweep the space and go over it with a vacuum cleaner.

Pay extra attention to floors this time of year — even if you haven't just broken something. With guests coming-and-going and a surplus of decor you don't typically display, you may not notice something on the floor. "Be on the lookout for loose ornament hooks and sweep up fallen tree needles as often as you can," Forte suggests. Debris could cause slips and falls, and pets and little kids might end up playing with (or worse, eating) stuff they shouldn't be.

## Festive favorites can seriously harm your pets.

A cat might see shiny tinsel as a toy, but a single strand can become tangled in his intestines, causing serious damage. Holly, mistletoe, and poinsettias are toxic to dogs and cats when ingested. And as for candy canes (the real ones, not the dog-toy variety), their curvy shape and wrapper can be a choking hazard, and sugar-free ones made with xylitol are poisonous to dogs.

## Remember to secure the house.

If you're headed out of town for an extended period of time, you should do more than just lock up. "Tell neighbors you trust that you're going away and have them keep an eye out," says Forte. "Have your post office stop your mail and put lights — inside and outside — on timers, so they go on and off at random times during the night."

## Winter holiday fires by the numbers

- Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in 43% of home Christmas tree fires.
- Two of every five (40%) home Christmas tree fires started in the living room, family room, or den. Three-quarters of the fatalities and two-thirds of the associated injuries resulted from fires started in this area.
- The top three days for home candle fires are Christmas, New Year's Day and New Year's Eve.

## "Elf N Safety" Slogans for Christmas

- 'Tis the Season to Be Safe
- Light up your tree — not your home
- Don't be a scrooge — get it fixed
- Be on Santa's good list — be safe
- Santa likes a clean chimney, so do we
- Christmas is coming the Turkey is getting fat watch out hazards less you go splat
- Santa doesn't do plaster casts
- Christmas is best enjoyed at home, not in hospital.
- Best gift you can give your family is YOU! Please be safe
- Only Santa has a magical vehicle — don't drink and drive
- Smoke detectors make good stocking stuffer's

"Merry Christmas" everyone. Christmas is here in a few short weeks and there are lots of activities going on which can act as distractions to our work. "Did that present we order arrive on time?" "Did we forget to invite anyone to Christmas dinner?" "What was I supposed to bring to that Christmas party?" "What did I forget?"

It is a challenge to stay focused at work during this time of year. So, this is when it is especially important to take a second for safety. When you find yourself working away and your thoughts running wild with all the plans and activities of Christmas, STOP, take that short second to look around and come back to the present moment. Look for a hazard in the middle of your activity. Are you standing on a ladder? Are you in an awkward position or about to trip on something lying on the floor? Hazards do not go away. Only our awareness of the hazards goes away. And when we ignore hazards, we tend to get injured. Remember we practice accidents until we get them right.

Christmas injuries tend to put extra stress on everyone. Imagine yourself sitting around the Christmas table in a leg cast because you fell off a ladder or tripped over something. Unfortunately, these stories are more common than all of us might admit. Injuries at Christmas seem to magnify how many people are affected by an injury to one person. How many people count on you each day to come home safely from work?

Taking a second for safety may seem unimportant to you yet it is the one activity, the one action you should take during a busy and distracted day which shall have the most benefit in keeping you safe. Think of it as your Christmas present to yourself. In fact, you can think of each of those people who would be affected by an injury to you every time you take a second to refocus.

Think about this when you are about to drive away to some gathering this Christmas. The noise, the excitement, the distraction! Take a moment, take a big breath, count slowly to four, then drive away. Chances are that you will arrive safely once you focus for those four seconds. Drive UN-Distracted this year.

"Merry Christmas" to ALL. May the Blessings of this season warm the hearts of you and your families.



# Winter Holiday Safety

Winter holidays are a time for families and friends to get together. But that also means a greater risk for fire. Following a few simple tips will ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season.

## HOLIDAY DECORATING

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.



## HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

- Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.



## Before Heading Out or to Bed

**Blow out** lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. **Turn off** all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

## FACTS

- ! **More than a third** of home decoration fires are started by candles.
- ! **Forty-two percent** of decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.



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