Safety Matters

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News & Notes

OFFICE SAFETY

Accidents do happen in the office. Few office workers realize that they are twice as likely to be injured in a fall as a non-office worker. Nationally, only automobile accidents outnumber falls as the leading cause of all accidents.

Slips, trips and falls

* Don't lean back in your chair. Take time to reach out and hold on to the chair as you sit down. Be sure it's beneath you.
* Keep the floor and walkway clear of cords, cables and boxes. They are tripping hazards.
* Watch for slippery surfaces. Spilled drinks or water from umbrellas are hazards and should be cleaned up.
* Avoid blocking your view by carrying loads higher than eye level. Don't read while walking.
* Never climb on chairs, desks or boxes. Use a step ladder instead.

Safe lifting

Back injuries are a leading cause of missed work days in offices. It's important to know the right way to lift and carry objects. Before moving office equipment or lifting a heavy carton, remember these standard lifting instructions:

* First, use common sense. When you know the item you want to move or lift is heavy, get someone to help you. Apply the "toe test" to items to check whether you can safely lift them. If you can move a box with one foot, you should be able to safely lift the item by yourself. If you cannot, you should seek assistance.
* If you think it's heavy but not too heavy for you to lift, do it right: Bend at the knees, not at your waist, to lower your body. Keep the object as close to your body as possible. Once you have a firm grip, raise your head up first. Never try to stand up fast. Take your time and avoid jerking or twisting motions.

"Merry Christmas! It's a squeaky hot dog, chew toy. I hope you don't already have one."

HOLIDAY SEASON RIDDLES

1) If Santa rode a motorcycle, what kind would it be?
2) What did one Christmas tree say to the other Christmas tree?
3) What do you call a gigantic polar bear?
4) What did Santa shout to his toys on Christmas Eve?
5) What goes Ho-Thud, Ho-Thud, Ho-Thud?

Answers on Page 2 Safety Bits & Pieces

'TIS THE SEASON...

Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 8,700 people for injuries, such as falls, cuts and shocks, related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees. In addition, Christmas trees are involved in about 400 fires annually, resulting in 20 deaths, 70 injuries and an average of more than $15 million in property loss and damage.

Please follow these tips to make your holiday a safe one:

Trees:

When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant."

Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.

When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.

When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.

Lights:

Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates conformance with safety standards. Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.

Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets.

Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.

Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.

Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place, not nails or tacks. Or, run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).

Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

For added electric shock protection, plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. GFCIs can be installed permanently to household circuits by a qualified electrician.

Decorations:

Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree.

Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.

Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.

In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.

Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." Follow container directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

Here are a few safety tips to observe while shopping during the holiday season or anytime:

• Stay aware of your surroundings at all times.
• Avoid leaving gifts and valuables in your vehicle in plain view; place them in the trunk or on the floor between seats.
• Do not overload yourself carrying bags or gifts.
• Beware of con artists, scams, and pickpockets.
• Secure your wallet, purse and all credit/debit cards.
• Avoid carrying large sums of cash on your person. Using debit or credit cards is much safer.
• If you must use an ATM, choose one that is located inside a police station, mall, or well-lighted location.
• Resisting a robbery attempt increases the chance of personal injury.
• Shop safely online. Protect your personal information.

Safety Bits & Pieces

GO SLOW WHILE SHOVELING SNOW...

Snowstorms can be deadly in many ways, shoveling the white stuff is one of them. Hundreds of people die each year from heart attacks suffered while shoveling snow. Cardiologists believe many of those deaths could have been prevented. Some who die have heart disease, but others do not.

The American Heart Association says those most at risk are middle-aged or older and sedentary individuals. Cold requires the body to work harder to keep warm. Combine that with the exertion of shoveling and it strains the heart. Wet, heavy snow is the most dangerous.

The association gives the following advice:
* Wear layered clothing. Take the outer layer off if you get hot. Less clothing will also help you move better.
* Push it, don't lift it. Use a shovel with a curved blade. Push snow to the side of a walkway, even if it leaves a narrower path to walk on. For a driveway, push only enough snow to the side for one car to get out. If you must lift, use a smaller shovel on walkways that doesn't allow you to pick up as much snow.
* Use a leaf blower instead. When several inches of snow are predicted, power up your leaf blower and blow off the walkway and driveway two or three times before the snow gets deep.
* Take frequent breaks. Don't feel that you have to do the whole shoveling job at once. If you feel tired, stop and rest or go inside for a time to recover.
* Shovel before dinner. Eating a heavy meal before you shovel your driveway puts additional strain on the heart. Don't drink alcohol or caffeinated drinks before or during snow shoveling.

HOLIDAY SEASON RIDDLES ANSWERS

1) A Holly Davidson
2) I really go fir you...
3) Nothing, you just run away!
4) Okay everyone, sack time!
5) Santa Claus jumping rope

"And I can do the procedure right here in my office."

Slippery Surfaces

Be careful out there—and in here

Slipping and sliding means accidents and injuries. And even though it's winter, unless you're ice skating or skiing, you don't want to be slipping and sliding—especially around your workplace. Weather-related slips and falls become a serious hazard as winter conditions often make for wet or icy surfaces outdoors. Even wet leaves or mud can create treacherous walking conditions. And wet shoes and clothes can leave a slippery trail indoors, too, that can also lead to slips and falls.

Take these precautions to prevent falls and possible injuries:

- **Wear appropriate footwear** with nonslip soles on wet, icy, or snowy days.
- **Take extra care when walking on wet, icy, or snow-covered walkways.** Walk slowly and slide your feet on slippery surfaces. Avoid turning sharply when you walk on a slippery surface.
- **Hold onto the railing** when using outdoor stairways.
- **Be especially careful when carrying packages,** equipment, materials, etc.
- **Wipe your feet when entering a building** so that your wet soles won't cause you to slip on indoor flooring.
- **If you slip and start to fall, limit your injuries** by bending your elbows and knees and using your legs and arms to absorb the fall. Or roll into the fall, if that's more appropriate.

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

Here are some holiday gift suggestions from Oren Arnold (1900 - 1980), US author:
"To your enemy, forgiveness.
To an opponent, tolerance.
To a friend, your heart.
To a customer, service.
To all, charity.
To every child, a good example.
To yourself, respect."

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

During a recent password audit, the IT department discovered a new employee was using the following password: *MickeyMinniePlutoHueyLouieDeweyDonaldGoofySacramento*.

When they asked why such a long password, the new employee said the instructions were that the password had to be at least 8 characters long and include at least one capital!

From the State of Delaware's Office of Highway Safety...

Holiday Traffic Safety

Could the holidays get any busier? Between your regular work schedule, family commitments, and holiday gatherings - who has time to think about safe driving? You do!

It is worth the time it takes to be calm and in control while you are behind the wheel this holiday. Remember to:

- **Avoid Distractions.** It is hard to be calm and in control when you are distracted. Pre-set the radio to your favorite channel. Turn the smartphone off and put it away. Keep both hands on the wheel, eyes on the road, and your mind on the task of driving.
- **Slow Down and Respect the Sign.** Regardless of how others are driving, remain in control of your vehicle. Obey the posted speed limit signs on the roadway and stop fully at stop signs. If you encounter an aggressive driver, simply remain calm and pull out of the way.
- **Drive Sober.** The best way to be in control while driving is to be alcohol-free. Always choose a designated driver before the party begins, or volunteer to be the sober driver for family and friends.
- **Buckle Up.** The best way to stay in control of your vehicle is to be properly restrained in the event of a crash. Every trip. Every time. Everyone in the vehicle.

Drive Safe. Arrive Alive DE.