

Workplace Safety Group

December 2009

Monthly News e-Letter

Workplace Safety Group Travels the Distance For Health & Safety

Workplace Safety Group is travelling this month to Nunavut, recognizing that Health & Safety is as relevant in the most remote areas.

Ken Hicks will be spending a week with our northern clients sharing his expertise in health & safety.

We wish him a safe trip and look forward to his return.



Christmas Dangers

The best gift you can give is a safe Christmas. Here are a few tips to help you have a merry not a scary holiday!

Trees

- Look for a 'Fire Resistant' label when buying an artificial tree
- Don't place any tree (real or artificial) near a heat source; avoid walkways, doors, and keep your fire escape route free of obstructions
- With everything moved to accommodate the tree, beware of climbing opportunities
- Beware of little fingers investigating potentially sharp or hazardous presents under the tree

Though tree fires are not too common, dry Christmas trees can be a fire hazard. After purchasing a natural tree, cut 1/2" off the trunk so the tree can soak up water readily. Refill water in the stand frequently as trees "drink" a lot of water, especially when first set up.

Decorations

- Use only non-combustible, flame resistant tree decorations
- Avoid sharp, delicate, small tree ornaments
- Avoid decorations that look like sweets, they may tempt your child to eat them!
- Check each set of lights carefully for cracks, frays, bare wires and loose connections
- Ensure that correct amp fuse is fitted - refer to manufacturer's instructions
- If bulbs need replacing do so only when lights are switched off

Use only UL listed light strings to decorate the tree. Checking and untangling lights is best done at ground level before hanging them. Broken bulbs may pose a fire hazard, may cause cuts to the person handling them and may damage whatever they're hung on. Before plugging in lights, check thoroughly for worn or exposed wires which can cause fire and electrocution.

Questions, Concerns, Comments?

Email Carola Hicks

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Christmas is a magical day, and among the old customs, the food, the music, is something that has the power to open our hearts, some simple thing that can still surprise us.

How beautiful and dazzling bright,
One candle on a winter's night.

How beautiful these harmonies
That echo through the centuries.

And in this singing we shall find
The blessing given to mankind.

A blessing without price or end,
A blessing on your house, my friend.

Garrison Keillor

While large bulbs are not as popular anymore, always be aware of bulb size; the larger the bulb the hotter it will get. Check lights that have been on for awhile to ensure there are no burns, or damage to any surfaces bulbs rest against. Smaller lights are safer, especially on trees. Christmas lights are a beautiful tradition but should be treated with care. A holiday decoration should never turn into a holiday tragedy. Statistics reveal that you are 50% more likely to die in an accidental house fire during the Christmas period than at any other time of the year. That makes it essential to check fairy lights and not take chances with candles, paper hats and decorations, which are all potential fire hazards.

Falls are among the most common emergency room accidents associated with hanging lights. Be sure that a ladder is placed on a flat, stable surface and is leaning against a stable structure. Never hang lights on the roof or use a ladder without another person near to hold it and stand guard. Always check the roof for ice, snow or slick spots before stepping on it to avoid slipping and falling.

There is a common misconception that poinsettias are toxic. The origin of this could be because the name of the plant mistakenly seems to refer to the word poison. The plant is **not** very toxic, however, those sensitive to latex may suffer an allergic reaction and, it is therefore not advisable to bring the plants into the homes of sensitive individuals. If eaten, poinsettias may cause diarrhea and vomiting in animals and humans. If the sap of the poinsettia accidentally gets into an eye, it can cause temporary blindness. Even dry sap has an effect on the eye.

The risks are obvious when you think about it; unfortunately people do put themselves at risk unwittingly and make fatal mistakes at this time of year.

*We, at Workplace Safety Group, wish you and your families
Peace, Love and Joy of Christmas in your hearts
throughout 2010.*