



Holiday Safety for Home and Travel

Enjoy a Safe Holiday Season

From late November to mid-January, when families gather, parties are scheduled and travel spikes, safety should be top of mind. Following is tried-and-true advice to ensure your family remains safe and injury-free throughout the season.

Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children and adults should stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines. Updated bivalent boosters became available Sept. 2, 2022.

Of course anyone who has symptoms of illness should stay home. When gathering with people from multiple households, consider taking a COVID-19 test prior to the event to further reduce risk.

Decorate Safely

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.

When decorating follow these tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

- Keep potentially poisonous plants – mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry and amaryllis – away from children
- If using an artificial tree, check that it is labeled “fire resistant”
- If using a live tree, cut off about 2 inches of the trunk to expose fresh wood for better water absorption, remember to water it and remove it from your home when it is dry
- Place your tree at least 3 feet away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources, making certain not to block doorways

- Avoid placing breakable ornaments or ones with small, detachable parts on lower tree branches where small children can reach them
- Only use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors, and choose the right ladder for the task when hanging lights
- Replace light sets that have broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, follow the package directions on the number of light sets that can be plugged into one socket
- Turn off all lights and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house

-  Keep your tree hydrated! Check the tree stand water level every other day.
-  Beware of overloaded electrical outlets and extension cords which are major fire hazards.
-  Common holiday plants (poinsettias, holly berries, mistletoe or pine needles) can make your pets sick.
-  Don't leave burning candles unattended.
-  Burning wrapping paper in the fire place can cause flash fires.
-  Check smoke alarms to ensure they are working.
-  Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, boiling, grilling or broiling food to prevent a fire.
-  Keep a cell phone and portable charger with you at all times while traveling in case of emergency.
-  Keep extra cold weather gear, food, water, warm clothing, a flashlight, an ice scraper, blankets and medications in your vehicle in case of emergency.



As we move into the winter months, many will be traveling to see loved ones or hosting friends and family during the holiday season. While this time of year is full of celebrations, popular holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas can present potential danger for those on the roads and at home.

Stay Safe on the Roads

If you're traveling by car during the holidays, you're at greater risk of injury or fatality than other forms of transportation. You might encounter weather hazards, increased traffic on the roads, and distracted or impaired drivers along your route.

So, it's important to take road safety steps, such as:

- Prepare your vehicle for winter weather conditions in your area.
- Stock an emergency kit in your car, complete with a first aid kit, vehicle emergency supplies (e.g. jumper cables), flashlight and batteries, warm clothes, non-perishable foods, and drinking water.
- Avoid drowsy or impaired driving and remove distractions such as cell phone use.

You can find [additional transportation safety tips](#) through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Make Food Safety a Priority During the Holidays

Good food goes hand-in-hand with good company during holiday celebrations. And good food starts with safe preparation and ends with proper leftover storage to reduce the potential for food poisoning and other safety concerns.

Consider these simple tips for handling food safely:

- ◆ Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces frequently when preparing or handling food.

- ◆ Separate raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs from other foods.
- ◆ Cook food until it reaches a safe temperature. Keep food hot (140° F or above) after cooking if you aren't serving it right away.
- ◆ Store leftovers properly by refrigerating perishable foods within two hours.
- ◆ Don't forget to consider the eating abilities of young children when preparing their holiday food. Foods like grapes, hot dogs, raw vegetables, etc. should be cut into age-appropriate sizes to reduce choking hazards.

Be Prepared to Help Family Members and Friends with CPR, AED, and First Aid Training

One of the best ways to be prepared for the winter holidays is to brush up on your CPR, AED, and First Aid knowledge.

Nearly 1,000 people experience out-of-hospital cardiac arrests (OHCA) each day in the United States alone. In most cases, these cardiac arrest emergencies happen in a home or residence setting.

Here are some additional [sudden cardiac arrest statistics](#) for reference:

- 5% of OHCA in children happen at home.
- 9% of OHCA in adults happen at home.
- Nearly 90% of OHCA are fatal.

All this to say, you could be called into action to save the life of a loved one during the holiday season.



DRIVING DRUNK CAN PUT YOUR WINTER PLANS ON ICE.



2022 Holiday Season Impaired Driving Enforcement Mobilization

Dec 14, 2022 - Jan 1, 2023

This holiday season is just around the corner. As we prepare for festivities with family and friends, we want to remind all drivers the dangers of drunk driving. The holiday season is known for being merry and bright, but it is also known for being the deadliest season when it comes to drunk driving. Drunk driving is a problem on our nation's roads every day, but it's more prevalent during the holidays. During the New Year's and Christmas periods in 2018, there were 285 drunk-driving-related fatalities. These deaths were 100% preventable. In 2021, there were 10,511 people killed nationwide in [drunk-driving crashes](#), accounting for nearly one-third of the crash fatalities that year. The tragedy of these deaths is felt year-round, but for many, most strongly during the holidays.

Plan Ahead

If you have a holiday gathering on your calendar, make smart choices and plan out how you're going to get home safely once the celebration ends. If you are the designated driver, make a commitment to 100% sobriety to keep you and your friends safe. If you see an impaired driver on the road, contact local law enforcement immediately. Doing so could save the life of the driver, passenger, and others on the road.

Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over

You have to choose your role before drinking begins: will you drink or will you drive? Remember, even if you just had one drink and you think you are "okay to drive", you could still be driving impaired.

» Click [here](#) for **Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over** campaign materials.

If You Feel Different, You Drive Different. Drive High, Get a DUI.

Drug-impaired driving is also a problem on our nation's highways. Like drunk driving, drug-impaired driving is also impaired driving. So, whether legally or illegally obtained, driving under the influence of drugs poses a threat to the driver, vehicle passengers, and other road users. Like drunk driving, [drug-impaired driving](#) is illegal in all 50 states. In 2017, 45% of the drivers killed in fatal crashes who were tested for drugs, tested positive. Whether the drug is obtained legally or illegally, drug-impaired driving can be deadly for drivers, passengers, and others on the road.

» Click [here](#) for **If You Feel Different, You Drive Different. Drive High, Get a DUI** campaign materials.

On behalf of the NHTSA team, thanks for your proactive support in impaired driving prevention.



Healthy Habits to Help Protect Against Flu

The single best way to reduce the risk of seasonal flu and its potentially serious complications is to get [vaccinated](#) each year, but good health habits like avoiding people who are sick, covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like flu.

The tips and resources below will help you learn about actions you can take to protect yourself and others from flu and help stop the spread of germs.

- 1) Avoid close contact. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- 2) Stay home when you are sick. If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. This will help prevent spreading your illness to others.
- 3) Cover your mouth and nose. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk.
- 4) Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.
- 5) Practice other good health habits. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.
- 6) Clean your hands. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
 - [Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives](#) Tips on hand washing and using alcohol-based hand sanitizers
 - [It's a SNAP Toolkit: Handwashing](#) Hand washing resources from the It's A SNAP program, aimed at preventing school absenteeism by promoting clean hands. From the School Network for Absenteeism Prevention, a collaborative project of the CDC, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the American Cleaning Institute.



OFFICE SAFETY FOR EMPLOYEES



When was the last time you said, “be careful!” to a coworker as you bid goodbye or left a meeting?

We usually say “be careful” to friends and family on a regular basis. When they leave on a road trip, we say “be careful” as a reminder to pay special attention on those long drives. We say “be careful” when our kids go to the local amusement park or out with friends. When our spouse goes out to do yard work on the weekend, we call out “be careful please!” (and maybe say a little prayer under our breath).

We don’t often say “be careful” to co-workers but, honestly, we do want them to be careful. When most people think of workplace safety, their minds go to factory or warehouse workers wearing hard hats and using forklifts. We can't forget safety for office employees and prevention is the key to staying safe.

Slips, Trips, and Falls

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), slips, trips, and falls made up over 200,000 of the nonfatal injuries and illnesses in the private industry in 2020. Typically, this OSHA category is at the top in terms of number of cases with days away from work. One doesn’t often think of slips, trips and falls as causing death, but with over 800 in 2020, a year with many more employees working from home than ever, it was a top cause death; over 16% of all work-related fatalities being due to slips, trips and falls.

OSHA has rules and regulations pertaining to nonfatal injuries to slip, trip, and fall hazards. For example, OSHA requires employers to regularly inspect the workplace and address any issues they find.

*Personally, I’m fond of the inclusion of “your mental state” as a factor covered in the course in this category; how many of us feel distracted, ill, or fatigued at work?

Fire Safety

It’s a little sad how most people take safety for granted. We don’t think about it until there is an incident and at that point, it’s too late. Nobody comes to work thinking they are going to start a small fire in the microwave when they forget to add water to their cup o’ noodles (true story). Safety needs to be more than a one-time, annual event. All employees need to be reminded about common office fire dangers, as well as the nearest fire extinguisher and proper use.

