

TEC's Tips for a Safe and Happy Holiday Season

During the holiday season, people are often busy, excited, and sometimes a little bit stressed. Below are some tips of ways for you and your employees to have a happy and safe holiday season:

Holiday Season Hustle and Bustle: Holidays can be a particularly stressful time for everyone. There's the cleaning and decorating to do, the relatives and friends to invite, the menus to plan, the cookies and cakes to bake, and the gifts to buy and wrap. Under these conditions no wonder you may feel stressed? Most of us cannot avoid stress completely during this time, however, give yourself a bit of a break. Have a realistic plan, which will reduce the hustle and bustle that we fall into during the holiday season. Allow enough time to shop rather than rushing through stores and busy parking lots. Plan to accomplish a reasonable number of errands.

Stick to your shopping list and budget. Overspending is a common source of holiday stress. Remember, it is the thought that counts. Maintain your sense of humour. If someone steals your parking spot, resist yelling out the window. Find another spot and start your holiday shopping. Don't skip meals. You need to recharge your battery approximately every three hours. Lastly, take some time out for yourself. Schedule some down time for you to relax, read, spend time with your family, or enjoy your favourite hobby.

Alcohol and Partying: Being a smart party host or guest should include being sensible about alcoholic drinks. Limit your consumption of alcohol and try spacing your drinks at least an hour apart. Have something to eat while you are drinking and try alternating alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks throughout the party to cut down on the amount you drink.

More than half of all traffic fatalities are alcohol-related. Use designated drivers, to drive guests home after a holiday party. If you are having a work-related party, consider handing out cab chits to ensure your employees arrive home safely.

Health and Safety within your Home: With all of the holiday decorations that we insist on putting up annually, we sometimes forget about the health and safety of ourselves and our homes. Below are some practical tips to keep in mind to maintain a safe home during the holiday season.

- Holiday trees: Make sure the tree is well-secured in a sturdy stand. Place the tree away from high traffic areas, doorways, heating vents, radiators, stoves, fireplaces and burning candles. If young children are around, avoid decorations that are sharp, breakable or have small removable parts, or put those decorations at the top of the tree.
- Holiday lights: When decorating your home, only use lights that have been certified by a recognized organization. Ensure you use indoor lights inside your home and outdoor lights outside. Check the light strings and extension cords you use, discarding any that are frayed or have exposed wires, loose connections or broken light sockets. Never run electrical cords through doorways or under carpets. Do not overload electrical outlets. Use more than

one outlet if the wattage of your lights is more than the outlet can handle. Turn off all holiday lights before you go to bed or leave your home.

- Candles: Never leave burning candles unattended. Keep burning candles out of the reach of children and away from pets, tree decorations, and wrapping paper. If candles are used in a centerpiece, make sure they don't burn low enough to ignite the decorations. Use sturdy candle holders that won't easily tip over.
- Toys and gifts: Choose toys that are appropriate to the child's age. Be sure to read and follow all warnings and instructions that come with the toy. Make sure batteries in toys are properly installed and not accessible to the child. Dispose of all packing materials such as Styrofoam, ties, plastic bags and wrapping as soon as possible.

Going Away for the Holidays: If you are going away for the holiday season, have some interior lights activated by an automatic timer. Have a neighbour or family member watch your house, shovel new snow, and pick up the mail and newspaper.

TEC would like to wish you and your family and very happy holiday season and we look forward to hearing from you in the New Year.

Warm Regards,

Bonni, Margaret, and Jodi