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Daily Safety Focus

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Hazards Never Take A Holiday!

December 1

We want you to have a safe and happy holiday season, so we are giving you some reminders about ways to protect yourself and your family as you celebrate. While the holiday season is traditionally a time of family get-togethers and social events, all-too-often it is marred by tragic accidents. Fires are common because of the hazards presented by dry Christmas trees, candles too close to combustible materials, overloaded or defective wiring for decorative lights, fireplaces stuffed with wrapping paper, and malfunctioning heating systems. Traffic accidents can result from slippery winter driving conditions and alcohol consumption. Little children become the victims of choking accidents involving candy or small toys. Falls while putting up outdoor lighting, burns from kitchen accidents and many other kinds of incidents occur over the holidays. Besides the seasonal hazards at home, hazardous situations can develop at work over the holidays. Special schedules may create situations where crews are short-handed or where workers are isolated. Cold weather and icy roads bring new hazards. And alcohol consumption can create deadly situations.

Here are some reminders of holiday safety at home:

Choose a fresh Christmas tree, not a dry one.

Set it up in a container of water and add more water as required. A dry tree is a fire hazard, so keep your tree fresh and moist.

If you think this combination of water and Christmas tree lights sounds dangerous, you're right! Keep the container of water covered and do not allow electrical lights to come anywhere near it.

Ensure your Christmas tree lights are in good condition and free of electrical defects or any signs of wear or damage. All lights must be working before hanging up the lights.

Safely use a ladder for putting up outdoor lights. Many broken legs and worse injuries have resulted from ladder accidents when tacking up decorations. Use a step stool or stepladder for putting up indoor lights and other ornaments don't stand on makeshift supports such as chairs.

Families baking and cooking efforts are an enjoyable holiday activity, but be aware of the hazards of slippery floors, cutting tools and simmering pots on the stove.

Do not attempt to burn wrapping paper or cardboard in fireplaces or stoves. It is safer to send these items out with the garbage if they can't be recycled.

Supervise young children throughout the holidays. When the household is in an uproar and there are many new items to investigate, a toddler is likely find something hazardous to play with.

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The Cold Facts About Winter Hazards

December 2

Staying warm and dry when you're out in the cold is essential. If your job involves working in cold conditions, this does not just mean the outdoors; it also means food storage freezers and meat-packing plants. You're at special risk in cold conditions, if you are an older person or have circulatory problems which make it difficult to stay warm.

It's important to keep physically active while working in the cold. It's also a good idea when you are working in cold conditions to work with a companion. You can keep watch on each other for warning signs of overexposure to cold.

Three serious consequences arising from working in cold conditions include trenchfoot, hypothermia and frostbite.

Trenchfoot is when you expose your feet and toes to wet conditions in nearly freezing temperatures. This leads to skin tissue damage such as blisters, open sores and possibly gangrene.

Frostbite is when body tissue freezes, most likely in areas such as the fingers, toes, ears and nose. The skin becomes numb and takes on a white and waxy appearance.

Hypothermia occurs when the body's temperature is rapidly lowered by exposure to cold and wet conditions. Symptoms include shivering and chills; the inability to think straight or speak coherently, irrational behavior, poor co-ordination and unconsciousness. This condition can be fatal.

You need to protect yourself from cold temperatures by dressing warmly and planning properly. Here are some guidelines to help protect you from the cold:

- Dress warmly by wearing a hat and warm waterproof boots and gloves. Dress in layers so you can add or remove clothing as the temperature changes. Keep clothing dry and make sure you put on waterproof gear before you get wet. Carry dry clothing, including mittens, liners and socks so you can replace wet clothing.
- The following areas are especially vulnerable to the cold: hands, fingers, legs, feet, toes, head, ears, face and nose. Keep them warm by wearing gloves and mittens, socks and footwear, hats and ear warmers. When riding in an open vehicle, wear a ski-type mask to cover your cheeks and nose. Gloves and footwear should not fit too tightly, as this could cut off circulation.
- While working in the cold, eat regular hot meals loaded with carbohydrates to provide fuel for your body to keep producing the heat you need. Avoid alcoholic beverages - these bring down your body temperature, rather than increase it, contrary to popular belief.
- While working in the cold, stay physically active. Take frequent rest breaks in a warm, dry place.
- Seek immediate medical help if you begin to experience any hypothermia symptoms such as drowsiness and excessive shivering. If this is not possible, seek shelter immediately. For frostbite, warm the affected area with body heat and lukewarm water. Do not cause worse damage by rubbing an affected area with hands or snow. If your skin tissue is frozen, do not thaw it if there is a chance it will be refrozen before you reach safety.

Cold weather can cause serious health problems. Avoid exposure to the cold by dressing in warm, dry clothing. Get medical help immediately in case of hypothermia and other cold injuries

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Give Winter the Full-Wheel Deal

December 3

You've refueled your vehicle, checked the oil and clicked your seatbelt into place. Pulling into traffic, you settle into your seat for the long drive ahead.

Before you get too relaxed, though, there are four things you ought to have thought about back at the filling station: your tires.

If tires could talk, the front left one would tell you it is dangerously underinflated and getting warmer by the mile, in spite of the fact it's cool outside.

"I think a lot of people are very lucky and perhaps ignore their equipment and get away with it," says Mark Cox, director of the Bridgestone Winter Driving School. "Heat is the enemy of every tire."

Tires can lose one pound per square inch of tire pressure every month under normal conditions, plus an extra pound per square inch for every 10-degree Fahrenheit (12-degree Celsius) drop in temperature. Unless a tire loses so much air that it appears to be going flat, a driver will never know it has become dangerously underinflated – unless he checks it with a tire pressure gauge or until it fails. Many drivers have not been able to maintain vehicle control in a blowout or tread separation situation. Tall vehicles with high centers of gravity can roll over during a catastrophic tire failure.

Although heat build-up in an underinflated tire is most serious in hot weather conditions, it can have serious consequences at any time.

Cox says many drivers only have correctly-adjusted tire pressures for a few days after their vehicles leave the car dealership or tire store.

Check tire pressures at least once a month before you move your vehicle. Driving a car 10 miles before checking pressures won't give you an accurate reading. Check your vehicle owner's manual or driver's side door frame to determine correct tire pressures.

With winter approaching, it's important to consider several aspects of tire safety, whether you are transporting your family to Thanksgiving dinner or driving while on the job.

Consider these tips:

- If you live in a snow belt or must drive regularly through one, invest in four (not two) good quality snow tires. "You can get by with all-season tires, but as a driver you have to be aware that you're just getting by," says Cox. "Any all-season tire is really a no-season tire. It's not the best it can be in the summer, or in the winter."
- Don't mix all-season radial tires having different speed ratings, or mix all-seasons with snow tires. The handling characteristics can be quite different, just like trying to run with one high-tech running shoe and one bedroom slipper.
- Tires should be rotated every 6,000 to 8,000 miles (9,600 to 12,800 kilometers) for maximum tread life. Winter tires should be rotated between 3,000 and 5,000 miles (4,800 to 8,000 km).
- Cox says a half-worn snow tire is no better in winter than a new all-season radial, and a half-worn all-season radial is no better than a summer tire.

Driving snow tires on dry pavement weeks after the last snow dump of the season will accelerate tire wear and can have a negative effect on vehicle handling.

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What Is Safety?

December 4

What is safety? Is it someone with the title of safety inspector walking around the job site saying: "Don't do this. Don't do that. Wear your hard hat. Replace that machine guard"? Does safety mean danger and risk, or is it protection from injury or damage? It is all these things, of course, but it is also a great deal more. Safety is a way of life—meaning that it is not something one should have to stop and think about, but should be as familiar and about as automatic as breathing. Of course, breathing comes naturally from day one, but safety only becomes automatic as we gradually absorb the lessons learned from parents, teachers, books, and our own trial-and-error experiences. Most of us have by this time reached the point where certain habits of safety are ingrained. Such as looking in all directions before crossing at a busy intersection. But to ensure the security that comes from making safety a way of life, on and off the job, we have to pay the price—which is cheap, compared to the dividends. The price? It's the same as "how to get to Carnegie Hall," namely, practice, practice, and more practice. This means that until we have made safety a part of everything we do in our lives, we need to force ourselves to think how to do it in such a way that neither we, nor anyone else will suffer harm as a result. This can be done. After all, consider the hazardous jobs many men and women work at every day without harm. On the other hand, consider some of the sports we watch either live or on television, in which—let's admit it—some of the fascination is the element of danger we know is present. Surely, no one steps onto the soccer field or into the racing car at the Indianapolis speedway without years of practice and training in which safety awareness was an integral part. That preparation makes it possible to concentrate on the goals of the particular game or race without consciously thinking about safety. But we know that accidents, sometimes-dreadful ones, do happen on the field or the track, with severe injuries or even death as the result. Does that mean that safety training and practice are not enough to keep us injury free at our jobs either? Not necessarily. There's an element of competition in sports—even those like mountain climbing or hang gliding, where you're competing only against nature or against your own previous accomplishment. And the athlete, having learned all the relevant safety lessons but also aware of the risks, chooses to take the chance and go for the win. Here at work, however, we're all on the same team. We don't do it by taking chances with our own safety and that of the co-workers who are our teammates. Instead, we continue to think about safety whenever a work decision has to be made. We conscientiously observe the safety rules and consciously practice the safe behavior we've

“Make SAFETY A Way of Life” One day at a Time

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learned. We wear the safety glasses, clear the debris from the aisles, mop up spills promptly, and read the label on any chemical we're going to use. If this hasn't already become automatic behavior, it will with further practice—and as with any accomplishment, some people may need more practice than others. At any rate, once we have all paid the necessary price of practicing safety, we will all share the dividend—a workplace in which the odds against our being injured on the job have become greater and greater.

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Safety Attitudes

December 5

Most of us had some type of safety training during childhood. We were taught to look both ways before crossing streets and not to play with matches. As adults, we are warned by others and by the media not to smoke in bed, not to stay out in the sun too long, and not to drive while under the influence of alcohol. And yet, common as these safety rules may be, how many of us can truthfully say that we have never turned a light on or off with wet hands, smoked in bed, gotten a sunburn, or driven home from a party after having a bit too much to drink?

Employees often neglect safety rules because they:

- Are in a hurry.
- Figure accidents always happen to others.
- Are resentful of their supervisors.

Every time employees engage in unsafe acts, they are taking a gamble—betting that an accident will not occur. Is health, and possibly life itself, worth such a bet?

When employees are aware of safety rules and break them anyway, we say they have unsafe attitudes. Picture a technician who neglects to wear eye protection while working with harmful liquids that could splash the face. Think about a warehouse worker who knows that an object weighs too much to be lifted by one person, but nevertheless attempts to lift it without any help. These employees are demonstrating unsafe attitudes.

Safety officers may give excellent safety orientations, you may know all the safety rules, and you may be able to demonstrate the safe way to do a job. But knowing every safe rule ever written will not protect you if you fail to use that knowledge daily on the job. The habit of doing things the wrong way is difficult to break, but it can be done.

The next time you are about to break a safety rule, stop and think about what could happen to you, your co-workers, or your family. Imagine the pain, the inconvenience, and the lost time and money that could result. Then do the job correctly, the safe way. At first you will be slowed down, but soon you will start to notice safety becoming a habit—and it will turn out to be one of the best habits you have ever had, because it will decrease your chances of joining those who are disabled or killed in accidents each year.

Here are a few basic safety rules that should be practiced again and again until they become automatic:

- Report all accidents to your supervisor, even though they may seem minor at the time. Studying the causes of accidents points out ways in which they can be avoided in the future.
- Practice good housekeeping to prevent slips and falls—your own or anyone else's. Clean up spills, and keep all areas—especially heavily traveled ones—free of clutter.

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- Know which types of fire extinguishers may be used safely on each class of fire. Use of the wrong type of extinguisher can cause serious injury. For example, you may receive a serious or fatal shock if you use water on an electrical fire.
- Use good body mechanics when lifting and moving objects. Get help when you need it and let your legs rather than your back do most of the work.
- Wear eye protection when needed: when there may be flying particles or when working with acids or harmful chemicals that might splash.
- Make sure electrical equipment is in good condition before using it. Have defective tools, cords, or other equipment tagged for repair. Do not touch outlets, switches, or electrical equipment with wet hands.

Share your own safe attitude and habits with your co-workers. You'll do this in a tactful way of course, but remembering that it's important for their safety and your own.

No one can say when an unsafe condition or act will result in an accident, when an accident will result in injury, or when injury will cause permanent disability or even death. So we must all resolve to work safely and never take chances with the life or health of ourselves and our fellow workers.

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Avoiding Road Wrath

December 8

Road rage is the name of a growing problem on our streets and highways. Angry drivers can cause collisions, and have been known to assault, stab or shoot other drivers who annoy them.

Keep control of your emotions when you drive. Take a few deep breaths, check your speedometer and slow down mentally and physically if necessary. Allow enough time to get to your destination, taking into account the usual delays related to weather, heavy traffic, construction and even errors made by other drivers. Otherwise, you might find yourself in a collision or in an angry confrontation with another driver.

How do you recognize the angry driver before it is too late? Here are some behaviors to watch for:

- Speeding, especially in congested areas, with no regard for other vehicles or pedestrians.
- Ignoring traffic signals and signs by running stop signs and red lights.
- Obstructing other vehicles, preventing them from passing or changing lanes.
- Bumping another vehicle from behind.
- Weaving from lane to lane, speeding and tailgating.
- Passing on the right side of a vehicle and passing on the road shoulder.
- Making rude gestures and facial expressions.
- Yelling, screaming, honking the horn and flashing headlights or deliberately blinding other drivers with bright lights.

When you do see an angry driver, stay out of his way! If an aggressive driver tries to pick a fight with you, back down. If you retaliate, the incident can quickly escalate from angry to life-threatening.

How can you protect yourself and others from a raging driver? Here are suggestions:

- Move out of the way.
- Do not challenge or compete with the angry driver by speeding up or tailgating. Never retaliate by cutting the other driver off.
- Avoid eye contact. Do not respond to nasty gestures.
- Call the police at a roadside telephone or on a cellular phone. Be ready to describe the vehicle and give the license number. Authorities will also want to know the location and direction of travel.
- If an aggressive driver you have encountered is involved in a crash, stop and wait for police so you can report what you witnessed.
- Drive your best at all times. While there is no excuse for aggressive behavior on the road, your driving error may tick another driver off.

If another driver is baiting you, keep your distance. Just calmly drive on your way and avoid a fight.

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THOUGHTS TO START THE WORKDAY

December 9

Do you realize how important your safety is to you and to your family? Are you "on the alert" every minute of the day . . . to the dangers of using unsafe procedures? Many safe procedures have been designed to protect you on the job. These safe procedures are vital to you . . . for you are up against a tough enemy who has an arsenal of missiles to launch against one of your most vulnerable targets . . . your hands. **SAFE PROCEDURES PROTECT HANDS** against injury's missiles, such as sharp edges . . . improperly conditioned hand tools, improperly handled material and other pinch points. Be on guard every minute of the day. Failure to observe just one safe procedure . . . just one time . . . can cause injury to those vulnerable "tools" . . . **YOUR HANDS.**

If you have learned the safety know-how of your job and learned it well it will be easy for you to catch anything some other fellow does that isn't as safe as it should be. If you see it and don't say anything and he gets hurt, aren't you partly to blame? Think it over.

Keeping an eye out for the other fellow's safety can help you too . . . a lot, sometimes. We all make mistakes. We slip up once in a while. After all, we're only human. But if each of us is keeping the other fellow's safety in mind, and he is doing the same for us, he's likely to catch our slips or at least the serious ones. You help him, he helps you. One hand washes the other. Believe me, it pays.

How are you fixed for safety? . . . Have you enough left to last until the next hazard comes along? Be sure before you answer. Buying safety is pretty much the same process as buying anything. Most employees buy it. Some buy more than others. Big buyers, naturally, are less likely to be injured on the job. They are also less likely to injure someone else. The question isn't always how much safety does an employee **WANT**, but rather, how much safety does he **NEED** . . . How are you fixed for safety?

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HAZARD RECOGNITION

December 10

I've never met a worker who intentionally injured himself or herself. This should go without saying. Unfortunately, many workers are seriously injured each year and many people still believe that accidents "just happen." But, accidents do not just happen!

What Goes Wrong? Usually, an error that is within the control of one or more people is at the bottom of things. Often, several errors take place, at the same time, for an accident to occur. So when we analyze accidents, we should focus on which aspects of a task were controlled and which were not. Assuming that workers have been properly trained and all the proper materials and tools were available, what else can go wrong? A lot! Accidents are most frequently due to haste and poor planning.

Don't Take Safety Shortcuts: When workers get out on the job with a supervisor monitoring their output, they are expected to achieve production goals. If they feel their job is on the line, they may take pay less attention to safety than to production, in order to look better in the eyes of the boss. This often means poor choices are made that put them and co-workers at risk. Many accidents happen in just this manner. And these incidents have a negative impact on production, because dealing with them requires valuable time and money.

Plan Ahead! It is an employee's responsibility to work safely, and that means taking time to review what is to be done--and what could go wrong. All employees should make it a habit to check out the site and assure the work can be done without mishaps. It helps to remember the Five Ps: Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance!

Identify Hazards! The following questions should be asked, to help predict what could go wrong and how risks might be controlled:

- Is the site and the job the same as depicted on the prints?
- Are the necessary materials available to perform the work?
- Does everyone have the proper tools to perform the tasks at hand?
- Are there enough workers to handle the job? Have they all had safety training?
- Are environmental conditions such as light, noise and weather a factor?
- Are there too many people in the area to work safely?
- Have other sub's on the job been notified about hazardous tasks or materials?

Don't wait for accidents to occur! Think and plan ahead!

Anticipate, Evaluate and Control Hazards!

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You Don't Have To Fall Off A Truck!

December 11

Falling while getting into or out of heavy equipment, a truck or tractor cab, hooking up air and electrical lines, or mounting or dismounting trailers is a sure way to get seriously hurt. An insurance industry study showed that falls from vehicles produced injuries that were almost 25% worse than other types of injuries.

Even an ankle sprain can play havoc with your ability to use the clutch. Minor injuries can cost you big in terms of lost income and downtime.

The biggest single cause of falls from a vehicle is driver error and failure to follow the THREE-POINT rule.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO AVOID FALLS?

No matter what type of access system your vehicle has available, use the THREE-POINT system to significantly reduce the chance of a slip or fall. The THREE-POINT system means *three* of your *four* limbs are in contact with the vehicle at all times—two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand.

The THREE-POINT system allows a person to have maximum stability and support, thereby reducing the likelihood of slipping and falling. Be a winner; use the THREE-POINT system.

DO'S

- Wear shoes with good support -- not sandals, bare feet or high heels.
- Exit and enter facing the cab.
- Slow down and use extra caution in bad weather.
- Get a firm grip on rails or handles with your hands.
- Look for obstacles on the ground below before exiting.

DON'Ts

- Don't climb down with something in your free hand. Put it on the vehicle floor and reach up for it when you get down on the ground.
- Don't rush to climb out after a long run. Descend slowly, to avoid straining a muscle.
- Don't *ever* jump out. You may land off balance or on an uneven surface, and fall.
- Don't use tires or wheel hubs as a step surface.
- Don't use the door frame or door edge as a handhold.
- Don't become an injury statistic.

The only person who can prevent a fall is you! The professional driver or operator knows the entire do's and don'ts of getting in and out of vehicles and practices the Three Point Rule every day.

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Holiday Safety

December 12

As the holidays draw near, decorative lighting and special effects become important components of the festive season. Christmas trees, in particular, are a traditional part of the season. And although they are special, trees pose a definite safety risk.

If you're using a natural tree this year reduce the risk of a tree fire by taking the following precautions.

- Choose a freshly cut green tree, not one that has dried out through weeks of storage. If you are buying one from a tree lot, tap the trunk on the ground; if several needles fall off, it's too dry. Needles that bend and are not easily pulled off indicate a fresh tree. Consider a potted Christmas tree so you can plant it in your yard once the holidays are over.
- Before setting it up, cut two inches diagonally off the butt. The tree will draw water more easily from a fresh cut.
- Stand the tree in a tub or bucket of water and keep the tree trunk immersed to prevent the tree from drying out.
- Select a safe location for the tree, away from drapes and curtains and from drying and heating sources such as registers, radiators and television sets. Don't block doors or windows which might be used to escape in an emergency and never put a tree near a fireplace!
- Use a tree-stand with widespread legs for better balance and a large water reserve in which to immerse the tree butt. Check the water level every day and add more as required.
- Check your Christmas lights for defects. Spread them out on a non-flammable surface before installing them. Make sure there are no broken bulbs, all electrical cords are free of cuts or frays and the plugs are in good condition.
- Extension cords should never be placed under carpets or where they could be a tripping hazard.
- Don't leave the Christmas tree lights on if there is no one in the room.
- If the tree begins to lose an excessive amount of needles, remove it immediately.
- Never burn your tree in the fireplace!

These safety tips will help prevent your Christmas holiday plans from going up in smoke!

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WATCH YOUR STEP!! DON'T SLIP & FALL

December 15

Slips and falls are one of the most frequent causes of accidents, both on and off the job. Each year in the United States, more than 300,000 people suffer disabling injuries from falls. Slips and falls can be fatal as well; they rank second only to automobile accidents, causing nearly 12,000 deaths a year. To avoid getting hurt from falls, avoid rushing and remember the following:

WATCH WHERE YOU WALK

Be aware of where you are walking. Look down continuously for spilled liquids, materials, equipment, changing surface levels, etc. Make sure the area is well-lit or use a flashlight if lighting is poor.

WEAR PROPER FOOTWEAR

Make sure your shoes are in good shape and correct for the job. Discard worn-out shoes with smooth soles and other defects. If conditions are wet and slippery, wear non-slip shoes or boots. Avoid footwear with leather soles which have poor floor traction--especially on smooth surfaces.

CHECK FLOOR OPENINGS

Avoid unguarded floor openings. On construction sites, when covers are placed over floor openings, avoid walking on the cover unless it is absolutely secure and will not move or collapse. Never jump over pits or other openings.

BE CAREFUL ON STAIRS

Do not run when going up or down stairs. Check to see that stair treads are in good shape, with no obstructions on the steps. Always use the hand railings that are provided. Avoid carrying large loads when going up or down stairs and ensure that stairs are well-lit.

USE LADDERS CORRECTLY

Never use broken or defective ladders. Set the angle of the ladder at the proper four-to-one ratio (height to width angle). Make sure the ladder is on solid footing and will not move when you climb upon it. Whenever possible, tie your ladder to the structure to improve stability. Anchorage at the bottom is also a good idea. Never stand on the top two steps of a step ladder.

MAKE SURE SCAFFOLDING IS SAFE TO USE

When working on scaffolding, make sure it is secure, stable and properly set-up. Do not work on scaffolding if guard rails are missing or the base is unstable. Check to see that planks are in good shape and not cracked. Tall scaffolds should be tied into a structure to increase stability.

DON'T JUMP OUT OF VEHICLES

Never jump from equipment or vehicles. Use the handrail and steps provided, remembering the "three point rule." Avoid stepping onto loose rocks, slippery surfaces, oil spills, etc.

Watch your step and don't trip yourself up! Remember, Gravity Always Wins!

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Darkness Descends On the Road To Work

December 16

More than half the motor vehicle fatalities occur after dark, even though night driving is only one quarter of the time we spend driving.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says we are three times more likely to be in a fatal crash at night than during the day. Most auto/animal crashes happen at night too.

As the nights get longer in the fall season, we spend more of our driving time in the dark. By the start of winter many of us will be commuting in the dark both morning and night. So let's review some night-driving safety.

- Allow yourself more time to get to work. Besides the darkness, there may be the problem of frost to remove from the windshield.
 - And frost on the road surfaces, especially when combined with the oil, which seeped out of the blacktop in the hot weather, makes roads slippery.
 - Check your driving lights and signal lights regularly to make sure they are working. Keep them clear of obstructions..
 - Turn your headlights on as soon as the light begins to get dim.
 - Use your low beams when you are following another vehicle or when a vehicle approaches from the opposite direction. When you blind the other driver with your high beams, you are endangering yourself.
 - Look beyond your own headlights. Use streetlights and the lights of vehicles in front of you to get an idea of what is happening down the road.
 - Leave an extra cushion of space around your vehicle at night, to allow more reaction time for yourself and other drivers.
 - Impaired drivers are a danger to everyone on the road. Statistics suggest that one out of 13 drivers drives drunk in the early morning hours, so give others plenty of space to maneuver.
 - If you have vehicle trouble, pull as far off the road as you can. Warn other drivers with your four-way flashers, headlights, interior lights and flares if you have them.
 - Collisions with wildlife can be fatal for automobile occupants. Animals are most likely to be active around roads in the early morning and early evening.
 - Observe warnings of animal crossings.
 - The references to a deer in the headlights are accurate. Honk instead of flashing your lights if you encounter an animal on the road because the lights may cause the animal to freeze.
- Brake to avoid a crash. Swerving might send your vehicle out of control and the confused animal may just jump in front of your vehicle anyway.
- Adjust your driving habits to accommodate the long hours of darkness this time of year. Leave yourself more time to travel, and be alert to dangers on the road.

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Weather Is The Wild Card

December 17

Be prepared at all times for weather changes affecting your driving safety. Weather changes can quickly alter road conditions and visibility. You can drive around a corner and suddenly find your vehicle skidding across invisible ice which has accumulated in a shaded area. You can be cruising along and wonder where the scenery went - it is shrouded by thick fog.

A good driver prepares himself for all driving conditions he might encounter. He maintains his vehicle to handle all types of weather. He also learns to anticipate driving conditions by being aware of weather changes.

Here are some reminders for winning against the weather:

- Tune in to radio and television reports describing road and weather conditions. That helicopter hovering over the freeway during morning rush hour can give you good information about icy areas to avoid.
- When planning a trip out of the local area, telephone ahead for highway and weather reports. You might be advised to carry chains to cross a mountain pass, or learn that a route is closed altogether.
- Equip your vehicle for the conditions you might drive through. Don't wait until the first snowfall to install your winter or all-season tires. It's safe to assume it is going to snow this winter, just like every winter before.
- Also switch to winter weight oil and winter coolant before freeze-up.
- Carry survival supplies in case you get stuck. Warm clothing, boots, gloves, quick energy food, matches and a candle are the minimum to carry in your vehicle in all seasons.
- Have the position of your headlights, tail lights and fog lights checked before the cold or rainy season. If they are too low, you won't see much; if they are too high, they can cause potentially dangerous glare for other drivers.
- Learn how your vehicle handles in rough weather conditions. Front wheel drive, rear wheel drive and all wheel drive vehicles each have a different "feel" to them. Learn how to correct a skid before it happens for real.
- Get used to your anti-lock brakes before you need them in an emergency. Read the owner's manual for your vehicle, which will explain you can hit them hard without pumping them if you need to stop suddenly.
- Sometimes road and weather conditions are too extreme to drive at all. If the highway patrol tells you to stay off the road because of a blizzard, do everyone a favor and obey.
- Flood warnings are other good reasons to stay home. Every year there are tragic reports of drivers who tried to drive across flooded roads and were drowned.

Wild weather adds to the challenge of driving safely. Be aware of weather patterns so you can stay off the road in extreme conditions. Watch continually for changes in road surfaces and visibility which accompany sudden weather changes.

Daily Safety Focus

WHY TAKE A CHANCE?

December 18

Are you willing to risk losing your ability to see? Thousands of people take that chance every day by not wearing needed eye protection. In fact 3 out of 5 workers who have experienced an eye injury were not wearing their eye protection.

A survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) found that nearly 70% of the injuries were the result of flying or falling objects. Most of the material striking the eye was reportedly moving at speeds faster than something being thrown by hand.

What can you do so you are not added to these statistics? Easy...

- **WEAR PROPER EYE PROTECTION AT ALL TIMES.** It is estimated that 90% of eye injuries can be prevented through the use of proper protective eyewear. Manufacturers of eye and face protection have greatly improved their products to help encourage more willing and more consistent use. In the past workers in the field would not wear the protection because of the equipment's lack of comfort, durability, or out-dated styling. Considerable advancements have now been made in the design of this protection to improve the comfort, durability and fashion.
- **MAKE SURE THE EYE PROTECTION IS RIGHT FOR THE HAZARD** and that it fits correctly. Also know when to wear goggles and/or a face shield especially when doing high hazard work such as grinding, chipping or working with corrosive compounds.

According to the University of Washington Ophthalmologists, Inc., most eye injuries are rated either mild or severe, with few being in between. Mild cases usually require only simple outpatient care such as irrigating and antibiotic treatment. Severe cases may require multiple surgeries and in most cases the eye sight will not be as it was before the accident, if the vision can be saved at all.

Protecting your eyesight should be one of your most paramount concerns whether you are on the job or not. Your company may provide you the protection, and have a 100% eye protection policy.

However, it is your responsibility to wear the eye protection. Without your commitment, you put yourself at risk of losing your eyesight.

Often people will think nothing of spending a hundred dollars or more for a pair of name brand fashion sunglasses. Some of the best safety glasses cost less than \$10. Fashion eyewear looks great and protects your eyes from the sun. But they are typically not safety-rated, and are not designed to protect your eyes from objects impacting the lens.

Remember! There are no good excuses for not protecting your eyesight.

Daily Safety Focus

How Workers Get Hurt

December 19

Accidents can happen anywhere and at any time. Many workplace accidents and injuries can be prevented if workers know the causes of accidents and they are taught how to protect themselves to avoid injury. Although no one wants to get hurt at work, there are four major causes for injuries on the job.

Back injuries

The number one cause of on-the-job injuries is physical overload. These injuries are caused by lifting (too heavy a load or lifting improperly), straining, overreaching, bending, and twisting. To protect your back against injury, learn and use proper lifting techniques, never bend or twist while lifting or carrying, and whenever possible, use a mechanical aid or get help with the load from another worker.

Hitting or striking against

The second most common cause of worker injury is being hit by or hitting against an object. The best way to protect against these accidents is to be alert to the potential hazards and to use appropriate protective equipment (hard hats, eye protection, gloves). Be aware of your body and the space around you. Give yourself enough clearance when passing by or ducking under equipment or going through a passageway.

Falls

To avoid injuries from falls, be sure that your footing is firm and wear slip-resistant soled shoes. Watch where you're walking. Don't walk backward to direct equipment or leap from one level to another. Make sure you can see over the load you carry and that walkways are well-lighted and clear of obstacles. Clean up spills or grease spots and use handrails when walking on stairs.

Machine Accidents

The fourth major cause of on-the-job injury is machine-related accidents, that is, getting caught by moving machine parts. When working around any moving equipment (a machine that rotates, slides, or presses) always use safety shields, guards, and lock-out procedures. Only work on a machine that you have been trained to use. Never wear jewelry or loose-fitting clothing that could get caught in the moving equipment.

Be alert to the hazards you face on your job and learn what you should do to protect yourself against accidents and injuries and follow the company's established safety guidelines.

Daily Safety Focus

Drive Forwards - Not Backwards!

December 22

Here's a driving challenge for you - try to get through the day without ever backing up!

Backing up can be much more dangerous than going forward. Backing accounts for many minor collisions causing damage to vehicles and cargo, as well as fatal accidents, particularly those involving pedestrians.

By planning ahead, you can avoid many situations, which would require backing up. Before you park, enter a loading yard or drive down an alley, think about how you are going to get out. Is there a better way to go, so you can exit by moving forward instead of backward?

If you do have to back up, here are some reminders on doing so safely:

- Walk around your vehicle doing a circle check. Look for obstacles you might strike when you start to move. This is a good habit even if you are going to be moving forward. Look for obstructions such as other vehicles, curbs, signs, overhanging roofs and overhead wires. Be aware of traffic patterns for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Some companies require their drivers to place cones around the vehicle so they will be reminded to do a circle check as they pick them up.
- Have a co-driver or co-worker guide you as you back up. The signaler must stand in a safe place in view of the driver and use proper agreed-upon signals. Do not rely solely on the signaler; you remain responsible for control of the vehicle.
- Watch in your rear and side view mirrors and over your shoulder as you back up. Use the "Big Picture" theory. Look at a distance around you in all directions, not just the exact area into which you are backing. Be on the lookout for unexpected pedestrians or obstacles.
- Do not lean out an open driver's door to see as you back up. This gives you only a limited area of vision and can cause the door to strike an object or person. Also, always remember to wear your seatbelt when operating any type of mobile equipment.
- Back up slowly. Cover your brake by keeping your foot above it so you can stop instantly.
- Make use of backup alarms, lights and other signals, required on certain types of vehicles used for construction, utility maintenance and other purposes. These devices - mechanical, electrical, electronic and sonic - are made to warn other personnel and passersby. They can be triggered by a gearshift or by the drive shaft. On some varieties, the signal can be adjusted to identify the type of vehicle backing up, and volume can be adjusted. However, never rely on these alarms to alert other persons. Take all other precautions to back up safely. All personnel in the area should receive training regarding backup alarms.
- As a pedestrian or driver, be continually alert for vehicles, which may start to back up. Watch for them in parking lots, terminal yards, loading areas, warehouses, construction sites and in parallel parking slots along the streets. Listen for backup alarms, but never rely on them to warn you. Backing up a vehicle can put you at risk of an accident causing injury and property damage. Avoid this maneuver whenever possible.

Daily Safety Focus

WHAT TO DO ABOUT "NEAR MISSES?"

December 23

Unlike a western gunfight "shoot out" at the corral on television, serious accidents can cause real anguish and suffering so real and vivid that persons involved or nearby bystanders rarely forget the flow of blood, broken limbs, crushed bodies, or screams of pain. An accident without injury though is more like the bloodless, painless fakery of television "violence"-perhaps without real purpose in the drama, and therefore easy to forget. In real life there is a danger in brushing off accidents that do not hurt, harm, or damage. When these accidents, or perhaps we should refer to them as near misses, happen we should immediately run the red warning flag up the pole. Because a non-injury accident is like a 104 degree fever, it's a positive sign or symptom that something is wrong. Sometimes we misdiagnose or completely fail to diagnose the symptoms of near misses, because luck or blind chance saved us from injury. We may tend to shrug it off and forget the near miss with a casual kind of ignorance. Hopefully everyone agrees that it is not a good practice to rely on luck for effective accident prevention. One of the best ways to eliminate the likelihood of future close calls is through effective root cause analysis and effective corrective action taken on near misses. A list of near misses can be almost endless: lack of proper machine guarding; improper maintenance or grounding of equipment; missing handrails or guardrails; poor housekeeping; improperly stored material; stubbing a toe on a protruding floor object; bumping up against a sharp object; or tripping over clutter and almost falling down. It's best to learn the real lessons from these near misses, since they are very likely to continue to occur repeatedly until an injury occurs. There was a study done many years ago that found for every serious or disabling injury reported, there were about 10 injuries of a less serious nature, 30 property damage incidents, and about 600 incidents (near misses) with no visible injury or property damage. This study was part of the foundation for the widely accepted accident prevention theory that "increased frequency leads to severity." How can you help? Report each and every near miss incident to your supervisor immediately in order to help prompt investigation and follow up actions that will reduce the potential for future near misses. Supervisors must partially rely upon you and your fellow workers to report these to them as they just can't see everything. If you are involved with or witness a near miss incident, remember that you or your co-worker may not get a second injury free chance to hoist that red warning flag up the pole. Do your part to help make the workplace safe for everyone involved. Report those near misses to your supervisor immediately!

Daily Safety Focus

Common Sense Safety

December 26

There are a number of safety problems common to most workplaces and job sites that can be solved with a little common sense. Planning and thinking ahead can help eliminate most of these hazards. Take a close look at your workplace with these suggestions in mind.

Eliminate junk piles. Organize a clean up program to remove trash, broken parts, and scrap from work areas, walkways, storerooms, and neglected corners. Look for materials that have been stacked improperly. An unstable stack is a real danger to anyone who may be near if the material suddenly falls. Check such things as wood pallets, dock freight, storeroom boxes, construction materials and even office files to see that materials are stacked properly.

Examine all the operations of your workplace to determine if personal protective clothing is needed, then make it readily available. Ear protection, eye protection, hard hats, gloves, safety shoes or other protective clothing and equipment must be worn according to the hazard exposure.

Make sure all electric power tools are grounded. Protect yourself from electric shock by using tools with three-prong plugs, a ground-fault system or double insulation. Never cut off the ground plug on a three-prong plug. Check electrical cords and wires for any damage. Guard power tools and moving machine parts. Tools and equipment should never be operated with the guards or shields removed.

Inspect portable ladders to make sure they are secure and don't shake or wiggle. Non-slip feet are a must. If a ladder seems weak, get rid of it – don't let others use a defective ladder. Mark it defective and throw it away.

Fire extinguishers are a must and should be mounted properly, readily accessible, and in working order. Check fire regulations to make sure they are properly placed and the right type for your work area. When was the last time your fire extinguishers were tested? Extinguisher inspections should be made regularly then tagged to show when and who performed the tests.

Exits should be clearly marked with easy to read signs place above the doors. Signs with arrows should also be used to guide people to the exit if the layout of the workplace is confusing to those unfamiliar with your facility. Illuminated signs should be kept in working order at all times. Don't block exits or signs with vehicles or material. Another good idea is to mark doors that are not exits with "This is Not An Exit," "Restroom," "Storeroom" or "Closet." Put rails on all stairways. All stairs and truck steps should be in good shape with nonskid treads. Repair those that are damaged or chipped.

Safety meetings are one of the most important parts of a good safety program, so hold them regularly. Impress upon every worker that it's important that they take every precaution to keep the workplace safe. Both employee and employer attitudes toward safety provide a key to a successful safety program. Posters, handouts, and training programs are all part of our safety communication.

Daily Safety Focus

GENERAL SAFETY - UNSAFE ACTS

December 29

Most of us know that accidents are caused by only two things - unsafe acts or practices, and unsafe conditions. Some of us even know that 9 out of 10 accidents are the result of unsafe acts, or things we do when we know better. This is kind of strange if you think about it. *We have more to fear from our own actions than from any other job hazards around us.* Why do we deliberately expose ourselves to injury every day? It Won't Happen To Me Basically, most of us are just thinking about getting the job done and we tend to rationalize the risk of getting injured. We think to ourselves that we have done this job many, many times this way and nothing bad has happened. Therefore, nothing bad will happen to us today. On an intellectual level, we realize there is a potential danger but decide that the risk of being injured is low. Because we have not been injured so far, we actually think of ourselves as being very safety conscious. We know the right way to do it, we realize that it is hazardous to do it this way, but what we are really thinking to ourselves is "it won't happen to me."

We Take Short Cuts Some of us are fairly meticulous about following safe work practices, but because a job "will only take a minute" we use an unsafe method or tool. For example, not putting on our safety glasses because the job will only take a minute, or not locking out a machine because an adjustment will only take a second. Usually we think about it just before we do something a little unsafe, or maybe quite a bit unsafe. We know better, we know the safe way to do it, but we take that little chance. In effect we are saying, "I know that this could result in an injury, but "it can't happen to me." Maybe it's human nature to think that accidents always happen to someone else, but they can happen to you too. What makes you different? Why take a chance in the first place? Only you can decide to take the time to do your job safely and correctly the first time.

Daily Safety Focus

Driver Errors Add Up To Injuries

December 30

At a glance, driving appears pretty easy. You just point the vehicle in the right direction, dial up some tunes and head for wherever you're going, thinking about some movie you watched last night. It's all so automatic, until a child runs directly into your path or you realize that you're travelling at freeway speed and traffic just ahead isn't moving. One professional driving instructor said it's amazing there aren't more collisions, given the number of driver errors being made.

Some big ones include failing to fully stop at stop signs, not using signal lights, and not being aware of what's going on around the vehicle being driven. Those who think a rear view mirror is for checking their hair likely won't be glancing into it while waiting at a red light, to ensure someone isn't racing up from behind with no intention of stopping.

The driver who is looking well ahead on the highway will see things unfold that can easily result in a multi-car pile up.

It's been estimated 77 per cent of motor vehicle collisions are caused by driver error.

How do you stack up? Do you:

- Check rear and side view mirrors regularly to see what other drivers around you are doing?
- Make eye contact with other drivers and pedestrians to learn their intentions?
- Scan the road well ahead to see what's happening?
- Leave yourself an escape route? For example, by leaving some space between your car and the one ahead at a red light, you may be able to move out of harm's way if a vehicle approaching from behind doesn't seem to be slowing.
- Leave at least two seconds' driving space between your car and the one you're following, so you can react if something unforeseen happens?

Dawn Schaefer, a driving instructor in British Columbia, Canada, said it's hard to estimate how many drivers are truly defensive.

"Every time they go out it's different," she says. "If they are thinking of something else, they are not able to act defensively." Schaefer says many drivers have "tunnel vision," staring straight ahead and not looking around while moving. She routinely reminds her students to check more than once for approaching traffic before making a move. A second check could prevent many collisions.

A good driving exercise is to think of the worst possible thing that could happen to you at that moment, and decide how you would react to avoid that collision. "That keeps you ahead and in the "now" of driving," she says.

Daily Safety Focus

The Scoop About Snow Shoveling

December 31

While shoveling snow can be good exercise, it can also be dangerous for optimistic shovelers who take on more than they can handle.

The National Safety Council offers the following tips to help you get a handle on safe shoveling:

- 1- Individuals over the age of 40, or those who are relatively inactive, should be especially careful. If you have a history of heart trouble, do not shovel without a doctor's permission.
- 2- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- 3- Take it slow! Shoveling (like lifting weights) can raise your heart rate and blood pressure dramatically; so pace yourself.
- 4- Be sure to stretch out and warm up before taking on the task.
- 5- Shovel only fresh snow. Freshly fallen, powdery snow is easier to shovel than the wet, packed-down variety.
- 6- Push the snow as you shovel. It's easier on your back than lifting the snow out of the way.
- 7- Don't pick up too much at once. Use a small shovel, or fill only one-fourth or one-half of a large one.
- 8- Lift with your legs bent, not your back. Keep your back straight. By bending and "sitting" into the movement, you'll keep your spine upright and less stressed. Your shoulders, torso and thighs can do the work for you.
- 9- Do not work to the point of exhaustion. If you run out of breath, take a break. If you feel tightness in your chest, stop immediately.
- 10- Dress warmly. Remember that extremities, such as the nose, ears, hands and feet, need extra attention during winter's cold.
- 11- Wear a turtleneck sweater, cap, scarf, face protection, mittens, wool socks and waterproof boots.

Taking these precautions while shoveling snow could be the difference between some healthy exercise, and a trip to the hospital or worse.