

Risk Manager

Answers, resources and information to help assess and reduce risk

Avoiding Holiday Mishaps

The Holiday Season is upon us and brings with it more than just the prospects of good food and some time away from the office. This time of year also brings the increased risk of fires from Holiday decorations and the increased risks associated with winter weather conditions (while walking and driving). Pre-planning and enforcement of district policies may reduce these risks.

To get in the Holiday spirit, some decorations can be expected. When considering the amount of and type of decorations, we suggest the following:

- No candles or open flames
- If approved for use in your district; the limited use of Underwriters Laboratory (UL) approved decorative lights
- No stapling of decorative lights
- Inspect old lights for frayed cords or broken wire insulation, especially at the plug
- Only permit decorative lighting to be powered for a designated amount of time per day and require all lights to be unplugged daily
- Proper use of step ladders for hanging decorations
- No combustible decorations should be strung from the ceilings in corridors; and
- Combustible wall decorations (i.e. art work, posters, decorations and the like) should be limited to less than 20% of the aggregate wall surface

To reduce the risk of slips and falls during inclement weather we suggest the following:

- Remind employees to wear weather appropriate foot wear
- Stage adequate amounts of anti-slip and ice melt materials at each location
- Ensure exterior ramps and stairways receive adequate anti-slip and ice melt materials
- Provide adequate floor mats at entrances to minimize water drag out into the schools and ensure custodians are vigilant for wet floors; and
- Have “Caution – Wet floor signs” available at each location

Prior to use of any district vehicle at any time, but most especially during the winter season, to reduce the risk of automotive accidents from winter weather we suggest the following:

- Provide adequate ice scrapers and snow brushes to help ensure adequate driver vision
- Top off windshield wiper fluids, possibly with the ice reducing/melting brands
- Visually inspect and replace old windshield wiper blades
- Visually inspect and replace worn tires
- Visually inspect all vehicle lights; and
- Properly clear snow away from schools and away from the vehicles themselves so that drivers are not injured while entering or exiting their vehicles.

By following the suggested holiday safety practices, you will reduce the risk of injuries to students, co-workers, visitors and members of your community.

We wish you a safe and Happy Holiday season!

For additional information or training on best practices and safety management within your school entity, please contact Director of Risk Management Sharon Orr at (866) 401-6600, ext. 7152 or sorr@cmregent.com.