



NC LEAGUE
OF MUNICIPALITIES
RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST | WORKERS' COMPENSATION | PROPERTY & LIABILITY

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HOLIDAY SAFETY REMINDERS

Here are some popular, off-the-job holiday safety reminders for your use.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

1. Don't override ground fault circuits.
2. Use extension cords safely -- avoid creating tripping hazards & keep them inaccessible to toddlers
3. Use no more than one extension cord per outlet.
4. Grasp the plug, not the cord, when removing electrical plugs from outlets.
5. Do not exceed the wattage recommendation in light fixtures, over-heating may occur.
6. Have damaged cords on electrical appliances (vacuums, mixers, sanders, etc.) replaced to avoid shocks, electricians & fires.

FIRE SAFETY

1. Install and/or check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and their batteries.
2. Have your chimneys professionally cleaned and inspected annually.
3. Use adequate screening and other barriers to keep ignited materials in the fireplace and children/pets out.
4. Do not use indoor fires to burn trash/rubbish such as wrapping paper, gift containers, etc.
5. Dispose of burnt/charred wood, charcoal, ashes, etc. in non-flammable containers to a secure outside location; do not use flammable containers such as cardboard boxes nor inappropriate storage areas such as wood decks/balconies and attached garages.
6. Space heaters need to be kept away from flammable materials such as drapes and upholstered furniture. Follow manufacturer's recommendations regarding ventilation; a slightly opened window or other source of fresh air may be necessary for safe operation. In general, newer units offer important safety features such as guards that help prevent burns to children & pets, as well as an automatic shut off, in the event that the unit is knocked over. If possible, older units should be replaced with newer models offering these, and other, important safety features.
7. Both show and tell overnight guests about your home's emergency evacuation plan.

DRIVING SAFETY

1. Keep vehicles in good repair with scheduled, periodic maintenance. Keep an adequate supply of motor oil, windshield washer fluid, anti-freeze, and/or other supplies safely and conveniently stored. Make minor maintenance checks, such as checking tire pressure and head light positions, a habit.
2. Remember the importance of both seeing and being seen. Turn on your headlights in low light conditions due to time of day and weather conditions, for yourself as well as other drivers and pedestrians/cyclists.
3. Fatigue, as well as alcohol and prescription/OTC drugs can impair driving ability; make other, safer arrangements before, or when, your driving is impaired.
4. Before you start out, especially for a new or seldom set location, both confirm and bring with driving directions; give yourself extra travel time to allow for poor traffic, road and weather conditions.
5. Help yourself stay focused on your driving responsibilities; pull off the road when using cell/portable phones; keep music and conversation to a reasonable level -- drivers need to be able to hear surrounding traffic, their own vehicle, and road surface-related noises to make informed driving decisions.

FOOD & COOKING SAFETY

1. Maintain appropriate food temperatures when transporting, storing and cooking all foods. In general, keep cold foods cold/cool and hot foods hot/warm. Follow processor's directions, especially for thawing and cooking frozen foods.
2. Clean all utensils, preparation surfaces, containers, and hands before and after the preparation of raw fish, poultry and meat. Consider using disposable cutting mats and paper towels as well as an anti-bacterial dish detergent. Don't overlook the sanitation of cleaning cloths and sponges; clean them frequently with hot water and detergent by hand or in dish and/or clothes washer.
3. To help prevent burns:
 - Don't use excessive heat to cook foods; over-heated, spattering grease/oil is a burn hazard; burning food can lead to a kitchen fire.
 - Use spatter screens & lids when pan frying, and appropriate sized, long-handled stirring spoons, serving forks, etc. when handling large and/or heavy pieces of hot food.
 - Use pot holders and/or oven mitts of appropriate size and thickness; keep a few stored within easy reach of the stove top and oven(s) but away from heat sources and microwave vents.
 - And open microwaved containers with care and start with the side furthest away from your face.
4. In the event of a kitchen fire, suffocate it with a pan/pot lid or by closing the oven/broiler door.
5. Help mitigate cooking-related injuries -- keep young children and pets safely out the working area; use only appropriate and well-maintained tools-- dull knives can result in bad cuts, dish towels don't work as well as pot holders, covers made for microwave use will not melt to food and food containers.
6. Upon completion of cooking, completely remove all stuffing from turkey/chicken, etc. Place in a clean container for serving; refrigerate immediately after meal.
7. If in doubt about a food's safety, discard it.

8. Keep trash/garbage inaccessible to curious young children and pets -- cigarette butts, chicken bones, discarded prescription & OTC medicines, cleaning products, alcohol containers, etc. can prove deadly.

PLAY SAFETY

1. Toys intended for older children, especially those that shoot projectiles or have small parts that pose a choking hazard or that can be inserted on ears or nose, should be used and stored safely away from babies, small children and pets.
2. Follow guidelines published by the Consumer Product Safety Commission and manufacturers when selecting toys for purchase and play; age-appropriate refers to the child's age, not their intelligence.
3. Hosts should make arrangements to prevent access, by both their own children and visitors, to medicines in cabinets/purses/drawers, water hazards including pools/ponds/spas, traffic dangers in driveways & parking areas, and areas/structures containing potentially dangerous tools and chemicals. Set aside or define a space/area in which children can safely play; inform both adults and children.
4. Pets should also have their own safe place, one that is inaccessible to visitors; open doors, inappropriate treats, over-vigorous handling, and unguarded trash can all pose a serious threat to pets.

SLIPS, TRIPS, FALL PREVENTION

1. Don't allow clutter to accumulate into a tripping hazard on stairs, in walkways, etc. Clean up spilled food & beverages immediately.
 2. Help prevent miss-steps, slips and slides; adequately light steps & walkways, install handrails at an appropriate height, make use of night-lights, place boot scrapers & door mats at entries; apply non-slip adhesive strips, sprays, paints, etc.
 3. Wood floors and other smooth finishes can pose a slipping hazard to those in stockings; slippers with non-slip soles are safer.
 4. Well-practiced posture, balance, and muscle -tone play a vital role in avoiding both falls and fear of falls. Those who take appropriate exercise, on a regular basis multiple times each week, strengthen both their physical and mental conditioning.
 5. Area rugs should be secured to prevent their bunching, slipping, and end flipping. Don't place area rugs over electrical cords; walking on cords can damage their insulated covering and create a fire hazard.
 6. Make use of non-corrosive ice/snow melt products for walks and driveways
- For additional information contact risk management services at **1- 800-228-0986** and select **“safety and risk control”** from the available options.

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