

# Safety Talk

DECEMBER 2023



## SAFE WINTER DRIVING

**Objective:** To assure that employees are prepared for driving in winter conditions.

A little extra preparation is needed to assure driver safety during winter months or other inclement weather conditions.

**Poor driving conditions** is one of the biggest winter safety concerns. Due to shorter days, drivers are required to spend more time driving in the dark, and inclement weather can create slick roads and low visibility conditions.



### Safe Practices for Winter Driving

- Give yourself adequate time to reach your destination. Allow for an extra 5 – 10 minutes in your trip for poor weather and road conditions.
- Clear snow and ice from all windows and lights.
- Leave plenty of space for other vehicles. Increase your following distance to compensate for reduced reaction times and longer braking distances.
- Increase your visibility to others. Use your headlights to assure your vehicle is visible to other drivers.
- Keep your vehicle properly maintained. Assure that vehicle components such as the battery, tires, brakes, lights, wipers, and fluid levels are in adequate condition before starting to drive.
- Always keep emergency supplies in your vehicle. Make sure that your vehicle contains extra blankets, tire chains, emergency signals or flares, and nutritious dried or canned food.
- Due to the difference in the exposure to air, the surface of bridges can be worse than the road surface.
- Exit ramps can be a challenge during the winter. Some exit ramps receive less anti-icing material than main roads. Take caution and slow your speed when using exit ramps.
- Know who to contact in the event of an accident or breakdown.
- Keep your phone charged. Assure that you will be able to contact emergency services.

## SPACE HEATER SAFETY

Space heaters can be a common fixture in the workplace during the colder months, and when used correctly, they can provide warm relief. However, if space heaters are used improperly, are not kept clear from combustible materials, or are not functioning properly, they can quickly cause fire, electric shock or produce carbon monoxide (CO) gas.

As an employer, if you do not have a formal policy prohibiting the use of space heaters within your facility, it is important to provide guidelines for safe use. Practicing safe use and having guidelines in place may help reduce the risk of fire or injury to your property and employees.



- Use of space heaters should not be allowed unless supervisor or management approval is provided prior to use.
- Units that have been listed or labeled by a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as UL (Underwriters Laboratories), CSA (Canadian Standards Association) or ETL (Intertek) should be the only space heaters permitted for use.
- Keep at least 36 inches of clearance around every space heater and only use them in areas free of flammable liquids and easily ignited or combustible materials.
- Proper placement of the space heater is important. Be sure it is not in a high-traffic area or in any area where it may become a tripping hazard.
- If using an electric space heater, make sure electrical cords and plugs are not frayed or damaged. Always plug the heater directly into the wall outlet and be sure the power cord is not crossing a walkway. Never use extension cords or power strips, as these could overheat and lead to a fire.
- Be sure space heaters are never left unattended. They should be turned off when the employee leaves the room or area of the heater, and they should be **unplugged at the end of the day.**

## DECORATING SAFELY IN THE WORKPLACE

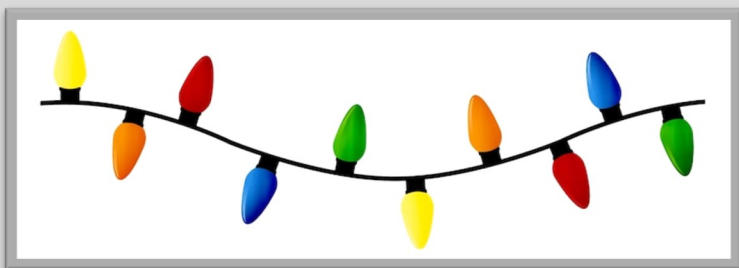
Keep all relevant OSHA regulations in mind when decorating your workplace: both when in the process of decorating and making sure you don't create new safety hazards that will last for the duration of the month.

Without proper planning, holiday decorations can result in dangerous tripping hazards. Avoid placing Christmas trees, gifts or freestanding decorations in heavily trafficked areas where people might run into or trip over them.

It's also essential to make sure that your holiday décor in no way compromises the ability of workers and visitors to exit the workplace in the event of an emergency.

When members of your staff are decorating the office, ensure that they stick to the same safety guidelines that they would otherwise follow:

- **Ladder Safety** – Make sure that your staff doesn't stand on tables, desk or rolling desk chairs when hanging lights or other decorations. Insist that they use ladders and that they have a partner to hold the ladder when they are working on high.
- **Keep Walkways Unobstructed** – you may have boxes of Christmas decorations that you bring out every year, or you may purchase new decorations too. When employees are decorating, make sure they keep all walkways free of wires, cords, boxes or any of the material you are putting up. When people are working in disorderly fashion, they can easily trip and fall.
- **Install Wisely** – also make sure that your staff does not put -up decorations in a way that can impede movement of your workers or office visitors, or create trip hazards or expose staff to getting caught in the decorations.
- **Unobstructed Exits** – Do not place any type of decorative items in exit corridors or on sprinklers. It is essential to verify that none of your decorations block exit signage or fire safety equipment.



## FENTANYL INFORMATION BASICS

### What is Fentanyl ?

- Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic drug, similar to heroin and Morphine.
- 50-100 times more potent than morphine.
- A rapid-acting synthetic opioid that alleviates pain.
- Acts quickly to depress central nervous system and respiratory system.
- Exposure may be fatal.

### What Color is Fentanyl?

- Fentanyl powder may be white, pink, purple, blue, or green.

### How much Fentanyl is fatal?

- 2-3 milligrams of Fentanyl can induce respiratory depression, arrest, and death. 2-3 milligrams are roughly comparable to 5-7 grains of salt!

### Who in the workforce is at risk?

- Mainly EMS, Law enforcement, Health Care, Clean-Up Workers, Corrections & Parole Officers, Highway & Parks Workers.

### A National Health Emergency.

- Drug overdose fatalities exceeded auto accidents as a cause of death since 2016. Illegally manufactured Fentanyl is chiefly responsible for the current crisis.

### Routes of Occupational Exposure?

- Inhalation of powders and aerosols, skin, eye & mucous membranes, hand to mouth ingestion, and accidental exposure with sharps/needles. Leading science organizations advise that incidental skin contact with dry products is not likely to cause overdoses. But, skin contact with liquid or gel can be highly toxic. It is prudent to provide full skin protection because the fatal dose is so low.

### Signs & Symptoms

- Stupor, pinpoint pupils that later become dilated, cold & clammy skin, blue or purplish discoloration due to low oxygen, coma, respiratory failure leading to death.

### Post-Exposure Treatment

- Administration of Naloxone (Narcan)

### Prevention of Occupational Exposure to Fentanyl & Other Opioids

- Guidelines can be viewed on websites of NIOSH, CDC, DEA, & Nat. Institute of Health.

## DECEMBER 2023 QUIZ

### TRUE or FALSE

1. Maintain vehicle fuel levels at 50% or greater for safety reasons.
2. Fentanyl is always white in color.
3. Space heaters must always be unplugged when not in use.
4. Connecting multiple power strips together is called "Daisy Chaining."
5. When decorating for Christmas, never obstruct the exitways.

### Answers

1. False 2. False 3. False 4. True 5. True