MAKE YOUR HOLIDAY A SAFE ONE

TREES:
When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label “Fire Resistant.” Although this label does not mean the tree won’t catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.

LIGHTS:
Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates conformance with safety standards. Use only lights that have fused plugs.
Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets. Always replace burned-out bulbs promptly with the same wattage bulbs.
Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord. Make sure the extension cord is rated for the intended use.
Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
Stay away from power or feeder lines leading from utility poles into older homes.
Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place, not nails or tacks. Or, run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).
Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
Use caution when removing outdoor holiday lights. Never pull or tug on lights – they could unravel and inadvertently wrap around power lines.
Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. GFCIs can be installed permanently to household circuits by a qualified electrician.
WINTER WALKING TIPS

Remember that no matter how well snow and ice is removed from parking lots or sidewalks, you may still encounter slippery surfaces when walking outside during the winter.

BE CAUTIOUS OF THINGS ABOVE YOU

- Trees compromised by heavy snow.
- Icicles
- Snow on roofs or elevated structures.

CHOOSE APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

- During bad weather, avoid boots or shoes with smooth soles and heels, such as plastic and leather soles. Instead, wear shoes or boots that provide traction on snow and ice; boots made of non-slip rubber or neoprene with grooved soles are best.
- Wear a heavy, bulky coat that will cushion you if you should fall.
- Wear a bright scarf or hat or reflective gear so drivers can see you.
- Keep warm, but make sure you can hear what's going on around you.
- During the day, wear sunglasses to help you see better and avoid hazards.
- Whatever you wear, make sure it doesn't block your vision or make it hard for you to hear traffic.

WALK CAREFULLY OVER ICE

- In cold temperatures, approach with caution and assume that all wet, dark areas on pavements are slippery and icy. Dew or water vapor can freeze on cold surfaces, forming an extra-thin, nearly invisible layer of ice that can look like a wet spot on the pavement.
- Walk in designated walkways as much as possible. Taking shortcuts over snow piles and other frozen areas can be hazardous. Look ahead when you walk; a snow- or ice-covered sidewalk or driveway, especially if on a hill, may require travel along its grassy edge for traction.
- DO NOT WALK IN THE STREET.
- Taking shortcuts through areas where snow and ice removal is not feasible can be hazardous. Try to avoid straying from the beaten path.
- Point your feet out slightly like a penguin! Spreading your feet out slightly while walking on ice increases your center of gravity.
- Bend slightly and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible.
- Extend your arms out to your sides to maintain balance. Beware if you are carrying a heavy backpack or other load—your sense of balance will be off.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets. Hands in your pockets while walking decreases your center of gravity and balance. You can help break your fall with your hands free if you do start to slip.
- When walking on steps, always use the handrails and plant your feet firmly on each step.

BE CAREFUL NEAR TRAFFIC

- Before stepping off the curb, make sure all cars and trucks have come to a complete stop. Motorists sometimes underestimate the time it takes to stop, often unintentionally sliding into the crosswalk.
- Due to poor road conditions, motorists may not be able to stop or slow down for pedestrians. Avoid crossing in areas where driver visibility is low—the cross traffic may not be able to stop in time.
- Be on the lookout for vehicles sliding in your direction.
- Vehicles should yield to snow removal equipment in streets and parking lots.

INDOOR SAFETY

Walking over slippery floor can be just as dangerous as walking over ice! Keep these tips in mind if you are entering a building:

- Remove as much snow and water from your boots as you can. Water from melting ice on the floor can lead to slippery conditions.
- Notice that floors and stairs may be wet and slippery—walk carefully especially by outer doors.

IF YOU SHOULD FALL:

- Try to avoid landing on your knees, wrists, or spine. Try to fall on a fleshy part of your body, such as your side. Wearing thick clothing can help prevent injury to the bony parts of your body.
- Try to relax your muscles if you fall. You’ll injure yourself less if you are relaxed.
The holidays may be a time of joy, but they aren’t always a time of peace. Balancing your family’s expectations with work commitments and social obligations can make this the most stressful time of the year. At the office, you may discover that the work is still coming in, but most of your colleagues aren’t. You may even be planning to take some time off yourself. Before the season gets too busy, try these strategies for reducing holiday stress in the workplace.

**PLAN**

Create a calendar for the holiday period, noting who will be at work on which days. If you know in advance that the office will be short-staffed at certain times, you can make plans. This might include reassigning essential tasks, prioritizing duties or hiring temporary help. If most of the office is on vacation, just having an extra person there to answer the telephone could reduce your stress level dramatically.

**PRIORITIZE**

What absolutely has to be done today, and what can wait until after the holidays? Ask yourself this question when you begin to feel stress at work. If a task can be held for completion in a week or two, set it aside.

**KEEP IT SIMPLE**

One reason for holiday stress is the desire to make everything “perfect.” If you’re working during this season, you may have less time for shopping, cooking, social events or travel. Lower your stress level by simplifying your holiday plans.

**ORGANIZE YOUR WORKSPACE**

If you’re going on vacation, organize your desk before leaving. Label files so that others can find information easily and leave a list of projects that you’re working on. If something needs to be done in your absence, leave written instructions. Your voice mail message should include the date of your return and the name and telephone number of someone in the office who could take an urgent message.

**TAKE CARE**

Fatigue, headache, elevated blood pressure, shortness of breath, increased irritability and insomnia. These are all symptoms of stress. You can reduce these symptoms by taking care of yourself during the holiday season. Eat balanced meals, get plenty of sleep, avoid alcohol and exercise regularly. Exercise is particularly important for energy and good health during the holiday season. Get a head start on your New Year’s resolution: Talk to your doctor now about creating the right exercise program for you.

**BREATHE**

If work becomes too stressful, stop and take a number of slow, deep breaths. Inhale, count to 3 slowly and gradually exhale. After 4 or 5 breaths, you probably will feel much more relaxed.

**THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON**

When your co-workers are on vacation, the phone’s ringing off the hook, the fax machine has run out of paper and you still haven’t finished your holiday shopping, the season may not seem quite so jolly. Nevertheless, do something to remember the real spirit of the holidays. Consider donating gifts to a needy family, collecting canned food for a local shelter or sponsoring “Santa’s visit” to a local children’s hospital. You might find this is the best “stress reliever” of all.
THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF MODERN HOLIDAYS

Americans throw away an additional 5 million tons of trash – 25% more than usual – between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Eve.
If every family reused just 2 feet (0.6 meter) of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles (61,000 kilometers) of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet!
According to one U.S. Department of Energy study, if everyone replaced their conventional holiday light strings with LEDs, at least two billion kilowatt-hours of electricity could be saved in a month. This would be enough to power 200,000 homes -- for a year!
The 2.65 billion Christmas cards sold every year in the US could fill a football field ten stories high! If all of us sent one card less, we could save 50,000 cubic yards of paper.

Try these ideas this year...

- Use cool wrapping materials. Reuse maps, the Sunday comics, and posters. Wrap gifts without a box. And remember to save ribbons, bows and bags to reuse next year.
- Give gifts that require little or no packaging, such as the gift of your time (cooking, babysitting, or gardening), a charitable donation, or tickets to an event.
- When going shopping, bring reusable cloth bags or tell store clerks you don’t need a bag for small or oversized purchases. Or combine your purchases into one bag rather than getting a new bag at each store. Thousands of paper and plastic shopping bags end up in landfills every year.
- When sending or giving cards or stationary, look for paper with the highest percentage of post-consumer recycled content. Or make your own cards from paper you’d throw away.
December Word Search

For a chance to win a great prize (more like an OK prize, but-hey, it’s a PRIZE!), complete the Word Search and send it via e-mail to lisa.drake@oswego.edu OR through Campus Mail: Lisa Drake, 110 Lee Hall. Make sure to put your name on it! The winner for November was Connie Monroe! Look for: Fire Resistant, Christmas Tree, Holiday Lights, Artificial, Safety Standards, Winter Walking, Traction, Slippery, Hazardous, Penguin, Center of Gravity, Handrails, Stress, Plan, Prioritize, Simple, Organize, Breathe, Spirit, Wrapping, Trash, Reusable Cloth Bags.

QUIT SMOKING!!!

Faculty and staff members may contact the New York Smokers’ Quitline, 1-866-NYQUITS (1-866-697-8487) or visit www.nysmokefree.com. Oswego Health also sponsors a free online quit-smoking program with support from certified cessation counselors; call 349-5513 to register.

Ergonomic Assessments

Christine Body has been doing ergonomic assessments since 1996 and is available to do them here on campus. She can be reached at 312-2770 and would be happy to assist you with any questions or issues.