



THE EHS CONNECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER-DECEMBER 2015

CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY TIPS

Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious.

PICKING THE TREE

Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.

PLACING THE TREE

- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2" from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.

LIGHTING THE TREE

- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

AFTER CHRISTMAS

Get rid of the tree after Christmas. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home. Check with your local community to find a recycling program. Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

From NFPA

FACTS ABOUT HOME HOLIDAY FIRES

One of every three home Christmas tree fires is caused by electrical problems.

Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious. On average, one of every 40 reported home structure Christmas tree fires results in a death compared to an average of one death per 142 total reported home structure fires.

A heat source too close to the tree causes roughly one in every six of Christmas tree fires.

More than half (56 percent) of home candle fires occur when something that can catch on fire is too close to the candle.

December is the peak time of year for home candle fires. In December, 11 percent of home candle fires began with decorations compared to 4 percent the rest of the year.

Source: National Fire Protection Association

THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY DEPARTMENT WISHES EVERYONE A HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON! MERRY CHRISTMAS, AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WINTER WEATHER IS COMING...KNOW THE TERMS

KNOW THE TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE CHANGING WINTER WEATHER CONDITIONS AND WHAT ACTIONS TO TAKE. THESE TERMS CAN BE USED TO DETERMINE THE TIMELINE AND SEVERITY OF AN APPROACHING STORM. (ADVISORY / WATCH / WARNING). THE NWS ALSO ISSUES ADVISORIES AND WARNINGS FOR OTHER WINTER WEATHER, INCLUDING BLIZZARDS, FREEZES, WIND CHILL, LAKE EFFECT SNOW, AND DENSE FOG. BE ALERT TO WEATHER REPORTS AND TUNE IN FOR SPECIFIC GUIDANCE WHEN THESE CONDITIONS DEVELOP.

FREEZING RAIN - RAIN THAT FREEZES WHEN IT HITS THE GROUND, CREATING A COATING OF ICE ON ROADS, WALKWAYS, TREES AND POWER LINES.

SLEET - RAIN THAT TURNS TO ICE PELLETS BEFORE REACHING THE GROUND. SLEET ALSO CAUSES MOISTURE ON ROADS TO FREEZE AND BECOME SLIPPERY.

WIND CHILL- WINDCHILL IS THE TEMPERATURE IT "FEELS LIKE" WHEN YOU ARE OUTSIDE. THE NWS PROVIDES A WINDCHILL CHART TO SHOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AIR TEMPERATURE AND THE PERCEIVED TEMPERATURE AND THE AMOUNT OF TIME UNTIL FROSTBITE OCCURS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: WWW.NWS.NOAA.GOV/OM/WINDCHILL.

WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY - WINTER WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE EXPECTED TO CAUSE SIGNIFICANT INCONVENIENCES AND MAY BE HAZARDOUS. WHEN CAUTION IS USED, THESE SITUATIONS SHOULD NOT BE LIFE THREATENING. THE NWS ISSUES A WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY WHEN CONDITIONS ARE EXPECTED TO CAUSE SIGNIFICANT INCONVENIENCES THAT MAY BE HAZARDOUS. IF CAUTION IS USED, THESE SITUATIONS SHOULD NOT BE LIFE-THREATENING.

WINTER STORM WATCH - A WINTER STORM IS POSSIBLE IN YOUR AREA. TUNE IN TO NOAA WEATHER RADIO, COMMERCIAL RADIO, OR TELEVISION FOR MORE INFORMATION. THE NWS ISSUES A WINTER STORM WATCH WHEN SEVERE WINTER CONDITIONS, SUCH AS HEAVY SNOW AND/OR ICE, MAY AFFECT YOUR AREA BUT THE LOCATION AND TIMING ARE STILL UNCERTAIN. A WINTER STORM WATCH IS ISSUED 12 TO 36 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF A POTENTIAL SEVERE STORM. TUNE IN TO NOAA WEATHER RADIO, LOCAL RADIO, TV, OR OTHER NEWS SOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION. MONITOR ALERTS, CHECK YOUR EMERGENCY SUPPLIES, AND GATHER ANY ITEMS YOU MAY NEED IF YOU LOSE POWER.

UPDATE THE EMERGENCY KITS IN YOUR VEHICLES WITH:

- A SHOVEL
- WINDSHIELD SCRAPER AND SMALL BROOM
- FLASHLIGHT
- BATTERY POWERED RADIO
- EXTRA BATTERIES
- WATER
- SNACK FOOD
- MATCHES
- EXTRA HATS, SOCKS AND MITTENS
- FIRST AID KIT WITH POCKET KNIFE
- NECESSARY MEDICATIONS
- BLANKET(S)
- TOW CHAIN OR ROPE
- ROAD SALT AND SAND
- BOOSTER CABLES
- EMERGENCY FLARES
- FLUORESCENT DISTRESS FLAG

WINTER STORM WARNING - A WINTER STORM IS OCCURRING OR WILL SOON OCCUR IN YOUR AREA.

BLIZZARD WARNING - SUSTAINED WINDS OR FREQUENT GUSTS TO 35 MILES PER HOUR OR GREATER AND CONSIDERABLE AMOUNTS OF FALLING OR BLOWING SNOW (REDUCING VISIBILITY TO LESS THAN A QUARTER MILE) ARE EXPECTED TO PREVAIL FOR A PERIOD OF THREE HOURS OR LONGER.

FROST/FREEZE WARNING - BELOW FREEZING TEMPERATURES ARE EXPECTED.

DRESS FOR SEVERE WEATHER

- IF YOU MUST GO OUTSIDE, WEAR SEVERAL LAYERS OF LOOSE-FITTING, LIGHTWEIGHT, WARM CLOTHING RATHER THAN ONE LAYER OF HEAVY CLOTHING. THE OUTER GARMENTS SHOULD BE TIGHTLY WOVEN AND WATER REPELLENT.
- WEAR MITTENS, WHICH ARE WARMER THAN GLOVES.
- WEAR A HAT. A HAT WILL PREVENT LOSS OF BODY HEAT.
- COVER YOUR MOUTH WITH A SCARF TO PROTECT YOUR LUNGS.

TAKE EVERYDAY PREVENTIVE ACTIONS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

- TRY TO AVOID CLOSE CONTACT WITH SICK PEOPLE.
 - WHILE SICK, LIMIT CONTACT WITH OTHERS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO KEEP FROM INFECTING THEM.
 - IF YOU ARE SICK WITH FLU-LIKE ILLNESS, CDC RECOMMENDS THAT YOU STAY HOME FOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS AFTER YOUR FEVER IS GONE EXCEPT TO GET MEDICAL CARE OR FOR OTHER NECESSITIES. (YOUR FEVER SHOULD BE GONE FOR 24 HOURS WITHOUT THE USE OF A FEVER-REDUCING MEDICINE.)
 - COVER YOUR NOSE AND MOUTH WITH A TISSUE WHEN YOU COUGH OR SNEEZE. THROW THE TISSUE IN THE TRASH AFTER YOU USE IT.
 - WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN WITH SOAP AND WATER. IF SOAP AND WATER ARE NOT AVAILABLE, USE AN ALCOHOL-BASED HAND RUB.
 - AVOID TOUCHING YOUR EYES, NOSE AND MOUTH. GERMS SPREAD THIS WAY.
- CLEAN AND DISINFECT SURFACES AND OBJECTS THAT MAY BE CONTAMINATED WITH GERMS LIKE THE FLU.

HOW FLU SPREADS

PERSON TO PERSON...

PEOPLE WITH FLU CAN SPREAD IT TO OTHERS UP TO ABOUT 6 FEET AWAY. MOST EXPERTS THINK THAT FLU VIRUSES ARE SPREAD MAINLY BY DROPLETS MADE WHEN PEOPLE WITH FLU COUGH, SNEEZE OR TALK. THESE DROPLETS CAN LAND IN THE MOUTHS OR NOSES OF PEOPLE WHO ARE NEARBY OR POSSIBLY BE INHALED INTO THE LUNGS. LESS OFTEN, A PERSON MIGHT ALSO GET FLU BY TOUCHING A SURFACE OR OBJECT THAT HAS FLU VIRUS ON IT AND THEN TOUCHING THEIR OWN MOUTH OR NOSE.

TO AVOID THIS, PEOPLE SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM SICK PEOPLE AND STAY HOME IF SICK. IT ALSO IS IMPORTANT TO WASH HANDS OFTEN WITH SOAP AND WATER. IF SOAP AND WATER ARE NOT AVAILABLE, USE AN ALCOHOL-BASED HAND RUB. LINENS, EATING UTENSILS, AND DISHES BELONGING TO THOSE WHO ARE SICK SHOULD NOT BE SHARED WITHOUT WASHING THOROUGHLY FIRST. EATING UTENSILS CAN BE WASHED EITHER IN A DISHWASHER OR BY HAND WITH WATER AND SOAP AND DO NOT NEED TO BE CLEANED SEPARATELY. FURTHER, FREQUENTLY TOUCHED SURFACES SHOULD BE CLEANED AND DISINFECTED AT HOME, WORK AND SCHOOL, ESPECIALLY IF SOMEONE IS ILL.

THE FLU IS CONTAGIOUS!!!

MOST HEALTHY ADULTS MAY BE ABLE TO INFECT OTHER PEOPLE BEGINNING 1 DAY BEFORE SYMPTOMS DEVELOP AND UP TO 5 TO 7 DAYS AFTER BECOMING SICK. CHILDREN MAY PASS THE VIRUS FOR LONGER THAN 7 DAYS. SYMPTOMS START 1 TO 4 DAYS AFTER THE VIRUS ENTERS THE BODY. THAT MEANS THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO PASS ON THE FLU TO SOMEONE ELSE BEFORE YOU KNOW YOU ARE SICK, AS WELL AS WHILE YOU ARE SICK. SOME PEOPLE CAN BE INFECTED WITH THE FLU VIRUS BUT HAVE NO SYMPTOMS. DURING THIS TIME, THOSE PERSONS MAY STILL SPREAD THE VIRUS TO OTHERS.

HAND WASHING WITH SOAP REMOVES GERMS FROM HANDS. THIS HELPS PREVENT INFECTIONS BECAUSE:

- People frequently touch their eyes, nose, and mouth without even realizing it. Germs can get into the body through the eyes, nose and mouth and make us sick.
- Germs from unwashed hands can get into foods and drinks while people prepare or consume them. Germs can multiply in some types of foods or drinks, under certain conditions, and make people sick.
- Germs from unwashed hands can be transferred to other objects, like handrails, table tops, or toys, and then transferred to another person's hands.
- Removing germs through hand washing therefore helps prevent diarrhea and respiratory infections and may even help prevent skin and eye infections.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING "ERGONOMICALLY"

AT THIS TIME OF YEAR, WE ARE ALL SUSCEPTIBLE TO ACHING FEET, LEGS, BACKS, AND SHOULDERS, AS A RESULT OF PROLONGED HOURS OF SHOPPING. (I DO REALIZE THAT NOT ALL OF US CONSIDER SHOPPING IN THE SAME CATEGORY OF "WORK", OR EVEN "SPORT", BUT I ASSURE YOU THAT IT DOES ENTAIL MUSCULOSKELETAL DEMANDS!) HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO KEEP YOU COMFORTABLE WHILE YOU SHOP:

- ALL SHOPPING BAGS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL. STRING AND PLASTIC HANDLES CAN DIG INTO YOUR HANDS AND SHOULDERS. FIND A BAG, OR BETTER, A BACKPACK, THAT YOU CAN CARRY COMFORTABLY, AND SLIP YOUR PURCHASES INTO IT!
- WHEN YOU'VE MADE SEVERAL PURCHASES, DISTRIBUTE THE BAGS BETWEEN TWO HANDS RATHER THAN CARRYING THEM ALL ON ONE SIDE. OR TRY A COMFORTABLE HANDLE THAT HOOKS AROUND THE HANDLES OF YOUR SHOPPING BAGS. IF YOU ARE USING A BACKPACK, USE IT PROPERLY, WITH WEIGHT ON BOTH SHOULDERS, RATHER THAN SLUNG OVER ONE SIDE.
- PARK IN THE FIRST SPOT YOU FIND. YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING THAT PERFECT SPOT NEAR THE DOOR ARE PRETTY SLIM AT THIS TIME OF YEAR - SAVE YOURSELF THE TIME AND HEAD STRAIGHT TO THE BACK! THE WALK (AT LEAST THE WALK INTO THE MALL) WILL DO YOU GOOD!
- MINIMIZE YOUR OWN WEIGHT. IF YOU DON'T NEED YOUR WINTER COAT TO GET FROM THE CAR TO THE MALL, LEAVE IT IN THE CAR. SIMILARLY, IF YOU DON'T NEED TO CARRY YOUR PURSE, WHY LUG AROUND THE EXTRA WEIGHT? IF YOUR CAR AND THE PARKING LOT ARE "SECURE", TAKE EXTRA TRIPS TO THE CAR RATHER THAN CARRYING YOUR PURCHASES ALL DAY.
- CONSIDER ON-LINE SHOPPING. IF YOU SHOP ON-LINE, TRY TO DO IT "ERGONOMICALLY" - SIT IN A SUPPORTIVE CHAIR, TRY TO GET YOUR MONITOR AT EYE LEVEL, YOUR KEYBOARD AND MOUSE AT ELBOW LEVEL, AND SUPPORT YOUR FEET ON THE FLOOR OR A FOOTREST.

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS FOR SAFETY

- FLASHLIGHT AND BATTERIES
- FIRE EXTINGUISHER
- SMOKE ALARM
- CO ALARM
- FIRST AID KIT
- LIFE JACKET
- GPS
- BATTERY OPERATED RADIO
- SAFETY GOGGLES
- WORK GLOVES
- HAND WARMERS
- JUMPER CABLES

WE ALL WISH **BECKY KEMPNEY** SMOOTH SAILING THROUGH HER DIFFICULT ROAD AHEAD. HER FRIENDS HAVE SET UP A **MEAL TRAIN** PAGE IF ANYONE IS INTERESTED IN MAKING A DONATION TO HELP BECKY AND HER FAMILY. THEY HAVE ALSO SET UP A **BRAVELETS BRAVERY FOR BECKY** PAGE WITH \$10 FROM EACH PURCHASE GOING TOWARD BECKY'S MEDICAL EXPENSES.

PLEASE SEE THE LINKS BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/39q0my>

<https://www.bravelets.com/bravepage/bravery-for-becky>

SUSTAINABILITY

Electric-vehicle charging stations available! In the south parking lot of the Shineman Center, 6 electric cars can charge at a time thanks to newly installed charging stations. This is another great step towards reducing our carbon footprint on campus, and it can be a great convenience for electric car owners. The first four hours of charging are also free! After this free period there is a \$3 per hour charge.

Ergonomic Assessment: 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.

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 Debbie Hayden! Look for: Christmas Tree, Water, Strings, Lights, Extension Cords, Frayed, Fireplace, Candles, Safety Testing Lab, Fire Extinguisher, Holiday Fires, Freezing Rain, Sleet, Wind Chill, Winter Weather, Advisory, Winter Storm Watch, Blizzard, Frost Freeze Warning, Layers, Water Repellent, Mittens, Scarf, Hat, Flu, Wash Your Hands, Contagious.

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CALVIN'S CHRISTMAS TIP... PETS BRING HUMANS LOTS OF LOVE AND COMPANIONSHIP. SHELTER PETS NEED GOOD LOVING HOMES, SO IF YOU'RE CONSIDERING GIVING OR RECEIVING A PET FOR CHRISTMAS PLEASE CONSIDER ADOPTING FROM A SHELTER. IF YOU'RE NOT ABLE TO ADOPT A PET YOU CAN STILL HELP BY MAKING A DONATION TO A SHELTER IN YOUR AREA.

VISIT: [HTTP://WWW.PAWSACROSSOSWEGOCOUNTY.COM/HOME](http://www.pawsacrossoswegocounty.com/home)

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/OSWEGOANIMALSHELTER](https://www.facebook.com/oswegoanimalshelter)

[HTTP://OSWEGOHUMANE.ORG/](http://oswegohumane.org/)