



# safety spotlight

## December 2017

Welcome to *Safety Spotlight*, an e-newsletter brought to you by the National Safety Council. We hope you find this newsletter of value. If you have any feedback or ideas on topics you'd like to see featured, please send an email to [\[email protected\]](#) and put "Safety Spotlight feedback" in the subject line.

### About the National Safety Council



The National Safety Council eliminates preventable deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. Visit us at [nsc.org](http://nsc.org) for up-to-date news, information and tools to take your safety program to the next level.

### Stay Healthy: Avoid the Flu

You can't enjoy holiday celebrations if you're sick, so staying healthy has to be a priority. About 20% of the U.S. population catches the flu every year, making the flu an epidemic – every year.



Germs are spread in respiratory droplets caused by coughing and sneezing. They usually spread from person to person, though sometimes people can become infected by touching contaminated objects. A sick person can infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five days after.

Use the following resources to create a healthier work environment by educating your employees on how to prevent the spread of germs.

- 5-Minute Safety Talk: [Preventing Flu](#)
- 5-Minute PowerPoint Presentation: [Preventing Flu](#)
- Checklist: [Facts About the Flu](#)
- Quiz: [How Much do You Know About Colds and Flu?](#)
- Flyer: [Flu Vaccination: Myths and Facts](#)

### Keep Safety a Priority this Holiday Season



As Andy Williams famously sang, It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year." But the holiday season also poses safety challenges for workers and their families. Not only is that to-do list twice as long, but weather can create road hazards and the flu bug can strike when you least expect it.

#### Workplace Festivities

With the holiday season underway, coworkers are decorating their cubicles and taking part in the office potluck. [Safety+Health magazine](#) offers these tips to help prevent injuries while celebrating on the job.

#### Safe Decorating

### Featured Safety Posters and Tip Sheet



This poster describes ways to avoid the flu and emphasizes the importance of staying home when sick. [Germ Free Zone](#)



- When hanging decorations, use a step ladder; never stand on a chair
- Don't hang decorations from fire sprinklers
- Inspect all lights, decorations and extension cords for damage before using
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or devices
- Extension cords should never be placed in high-traffic areas or under rugs, carpets or furniture; never nail or staple extension cords to walls
- Use appropriate length extension cords; never connect two cords together
- Make sure paths are clear of tripping hazards
- Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving

## Food Safety

- Check for safe food-handling directions and guidelines
- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling food
- Serve prepared dishes on clean plates – never on dishes that previously held raw meat
- Keep hot foods hot; USDA notes that hot foods should be kept at 140° F or warmer; use chafing dishes or slow cookers
- Keep cold foods cold - at 40° F or colder - by placing dishes in bowls of ice or by serving in small batches and replenishing from the refrigerator as needed
- Say no to foods that have been sitting out at room temperature for more than two hours
- When planning your menu, be mindful of co-workers' food allergies



## Tis the Season for Shopping

Follow these basic safety tips to make your holiday shopping a success:

- If possible shop with a buddy; it's not only more fun, it's safer
- Park in well-lit areas and remember where you parked
- Keep your vehicle locked and valuables stored out of sight
- Leave your expensive jewelry and hand bags at home
- Don't be distracted by your cell phone; always be aware of your surroundings
- Carry your purse close to your body, with your wallet in your front pocket
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason
- Don't get overloaded with packages; try and keep one hand free
- Have keys in hand before you get to your vehicle
- Before you enter your vehicle, look around for suspicious people or situations and glance inside for intruders or signs of break-in
- Always follow your gut; contact security or police if you feel unsafe



### Parking Lot Crashes - More Common Than You Think

Here's something you might not have considered: More than 50,000 crashes occur in [parking lots and garage structures](#) annually, resulting in more than 500 deaths and more than 60,000 injuries.

These numbers spike during the holiday shopping season.

Distraction is one of the leading causes of parking lot incidents. In an NSC poll,

Learn to recognize the signs of frostbite and hypothermia with this poster.

[Frostbite](#)



Poster of tips to keep everyone safe

[Holiday Safety Poster](#)



[Snow Removal Tip Sheet](#)

## Featured Webinar



Visit our [Webinar and Audio Library](#) to view our extensive selection of webinars and audio recordings. This month's suggested webinar is [Don't Fall Victim to Inclement Weather: Drive Defensively.](#)

## Member Benefits Guide



[A guide to your member-exclusive benefits](#)

66% of drivers said they would make phone calls while driving through parking lots. Using an app to put your phone on "airplane mode" is one way to [stay focused on driving](#).

## Beware of Online Shopping Scams

You can find lots of great deals online, but if a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is. Phishing emails or advertisements on untrusted websites often are designed to steal personal or credit card information, which can lead to the nightmare of [identity theft](#).

Following are tips from the Department of Homeland Security for protecting your identity – and your money – online:



- Do your online shopping at home and make sure your wireless network is protected
- Set strong passwords and change them often
- Do not click on links or pop-ups, open attachments or respond to emails from strangers
- Read online reviews and consider the reputation of the site
- Look for a secure checkout, with a web address that starts with https

The Federal Trade Commission also offers [these tips](#) to help you stay safe and secure online.

## Additional Tips to Keep You Healthy and Safe this Season

### Holiday Travel

Many people choose to travel by automobile, with the highest fatality rate of any major form of transportation. In 2015, 386 people died on Thanksgiving Day, 273 on Christmas Day and 355 on New Year's Day according to *Injury Facts 2017*. Alcohol-impaired fatalities averaged 36% of the totals.



- Use a designated driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party; alcohol, over-the-counter drugs or illegal drugs all [cause impairment](#)
- Make sure [every person is properly buckled up](#) no matter how short the drive
- [Put that cell phone away](#); distracted driving causes one-quarter of all crashes
- Properly maintain the vehicle and keep an [emergency kit with you](#)
- Be prepared for heavy traffic and inclement weather
- Do not warm up your vehicle in a garage – even with the door open – because of the risk of [carbon monoxide poisoning](#)
- Check the weather before you go
- [NSC](#) and [AAA](#) offer more tips for winter driving

### Home Safety

The home is the heart of the family around the holidays. So deck those halls and let it snow – but keep safety top of mind.

- Fire risk increases as holiday candles and fireplace use increases. In December, 12% of home fires begin with candles, according to the National Fire Protection Association. [Working smoke alarms](#) cut the chances of dying in a

home fire in half. Keeping live trees watered and avoiding the use of turkey fryers also keeps fire hazards down.

- When giving gifts be sure to check the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) for recalls, and avoid small parts – [like button batteries](#) – that can harm or even kill young children.
- When entertaining guests, make sure any prescription medications are out of reach and locked up. If you – like 60% of Americans – have leftover drugs in the house, locate a [drug take-back program](#). In the U.S., one person dies every 24 minutes from a [prescription opioid overdose](#) and most people who misuse opioid pain relievers obtain them from a friend or family member.

