

## It's Christmas time, stay safe at this festive time.....

**Talking Health, Safety and Wellbeing.** The weekly article to help you keep fit and stay healthy and safe in your place of work. This week's article talks about safety in the lead up to Christmas.

The festive season is upon us again and we need to consider our safety in the lead up to Christmas as much as at any other time of the year. The Health and Safety Executive have identified in the last two years annual incident statistics that the number of incidents where employees are injured at work have peaked in the final two months of the year, November and December. Christmas injuries tend put extra stress on everyone. Imagine yourself sitting around the Christmas table in a leg cast because you fell off a table or tripped over something. Unfortunately, these stories are more common that we might admit.

### What are the issues that come to light in the lead up to Christmas?

The main health and safety issues we encounter are slips and trips and falls, working at height, manual handling, fire safety and hazards from electricity. We need to think about our surroundings, the activities we are undertaking particularly as we decorate our offices and workspaces.

Taking a moment for safety and look around at your surroundings. It may seem unimportant to you yet it is the one activity, the one action you might take during a busy and distracted day which will have the most benefit in keeping you safe. Look for hazards in the middle of your activity. Are you in an awkward position or about to trip on something lying on the floor?

### How can I control these hazards and risks?

- Beware of trailing cables and wires, minimise clutter and keep pathways clear of decorations, gift boxes, and other items that can trip you up or block escape routes. Find a safe place for Secret Santa presents that won't present a hazard to colleagues
- Use manual handling aids such as a sack truck or trolley and where necessary ask for help when moving heavy or awkward items
- Be mindful of any rearranged furniture and positioning of decorations and make sure others are familiar with the changes too
- Avoid placing decorations in areas that are hard to reach and covering smoke and heat detectors
- Use a step stool or small steps instead of furniture to stand on when you need a few more inches to hang a wreath, picture or decorations
- Check that decorative lights are working and ensure that they are switched off at the end of the day or if unattended for long periods
- Fire safety: keep paper, plastic or flammable decorations away from hot surfaces, lights or heaters and candles. If you're using candles ensure that they are extinguished when not in use. Make sure waste is disposed of regularly and not allowed to build up.

In conclusion take the time to look at what you're doing, consider your activities, the hazards and risks and ensure that you follow the control measures discussed to stay safe in the lead up to Christmas. Next week's article will talk about how we can have a healthy Christmas. Enjoy the festive period and have a good Christmas.