

Safety Alert

BEING MINDFUL DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Issue Date: 1 December 2017

Context:

Statistics show that December is one of the most dangerous times of the year for workplace fatalities and accidents. Some of the causes for this rise in fatalities and accidents include lack of vigilance at the workplace, fatigue, and rushing to complete tasks prior to the Christmas holiday period. It is important that we all stay focused on safety.

An injury around Christmas time puts extra stress on everyone. Imagine yourself sitting around the Christmas table in a leg cast because you fell or tripped over something. An injury at Christmas time will affect many people, think about how many people count on you each day to come home safely. Make sure that your holiday plans become a reality. Please continue to look after the safety of yourself and co-workers continue to be alert as we approach the holiday.

If you find yourself working and your thoughts are not on the job, but are instead on your plans and activities for the Christmas holidays:

1. STOP
2. Take time to look around and come back to the present moment
3. Take time to think about the activity you are doing
4. Look for a hazard that may not be controlled; are you in an awkward position or about to trip on something lying on the floor? Hazards do not go away, only our awareness of the hazards goes away, and when we ignore hazards, we get injured.

The festive season can lead to late nights which could cause fatigue in the workplace and this will increase the likelihood of accidents.

Construction sites that are closing down for the holiday should conduct a site-specific risk assessment and ensure that sites are effectively secured and hazards eliminated while unattended. Items that should be considered include:

- Has electrical power been turned off?
- Are plant/equipment, tools, chemicals and dangerous goods securely stored?
- Are electrical power tools disconnected from power source?
- Are penetrations such as risers, floor penetrations and trenches, securely covered or back filled?
- Are building materials e.g. fence panels, roof sheeting, general loose building materials firmly secured to prevent incidents during strong winds and storms?
- Is appropriate signage erected with emergency contact telephone numbers?

It is important that we continue to be mindful of the safety of ourselves and others, including preventing or reporting any hazards immediately so that action can be taken to keep our workplaces safe. Let's all keep our minds on safety so we all make it to Christmas and enjoy the holidays!

