

What to Do When High Winds Are Expected

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Wind speeds are increased dramatically as gusts push through narrow city streets between tall buildings, a phenomenon known as the “urban canyon effect.”

Winds of this magnitude have the potential to bring down trees, power lines, scaffolding, signs and awnings, and can turn unsecured objects into dangerous projectiles. To prevent damage and injury, bring loose items indoors, and fully secure outdoor objects.

In advance of any storm, be sure your property is secure. Remove any dead trees or overhanging branches near structures, loose roofing materials and objects in yards, patios, roofs, or balconies that could blow away.



Strong winds can make driving difficult, especially for those driving high profile vehicles and anyone driving across bridges and overpasses. Maintain a firm grip on the wheel and keep a safe distance between vehicles.

If you are caught outside during high winds:

- Take cover next to a building or under a shelter.
- Stand clear of roadways or train tracks, as a gust may blow you into the path of an oncoming vehicle.
- Use handrails where available on outdoor walkways and avoid other elevated areas such as roofs without adequate railing.
- Watch for flying debris. Tree limbs may break and street signs may become loose during strong wind gusts. Keep an eye toward nearby balconies for loose objects that may fall.



In the event of a down power line:

- Call for help. Report down lines to your local utility emergency center and to the police. Do not try to free lines or to remove debris yourself.
- Avoid anything that may be touching downed lines, including vehicles or tree branches. Puddles and even wet- or snow-covered ground can conduct electricity in some cases. Warn others to stay away.
- If you see someone who has been shocked or may be in direct contact with a power line, do not touch them — you may become a second victim. Get medical attention as quickly as possible by calling 911.
- If a line falls on your car, stay inside the vehicle. Take care not to touch any of the metal frame of your vehicle. Honk your horn, roll down the window and warn anyone who may approach of the danger. Ask someone to call the police. Do not exit the car until help arrives, unless it catches on fire. To exit, open the door, but do not step out. Jump, without touching any of the metal portions of the car’s exterior, to safe ground and get quickly away.



If you are driving:

- Keep both hands on the wheel and slow down.
- Watch for objects blowing across the roadway and into your path.
- Keep a safe distance from cars in adjacent lanes as gusts could push a car outside its lane of travel.
- Take extra care in a high-profile vehicle such as a truck, van, SUV, or when towing a trailer, as these are more prone to be pushed or flipped by gusts.
- If winds are severe enough to prevent safe driving, get onto the shoulder of the road and stop, making sure you are away from trees or other tall objects that could fall onto your vehicle. Stay in the car and turn on the hazard lights until the wind subsides. ☪



Make it Personal:**COLD MEDICATION AND DROWSINESS**

Cold and Flu Season is here again. Now is a good time for a reminder about using over-the-counter cold and flu medications during work hours.

The most common side effect of over-the-counter cold and flu medicine is drowsiness, which lowers one's alertness and reaction time. Ten to twenty-five percent of people taking these medications report daytime drowsiness. This can be more than just an annoyance. Approximately 200,000 vehicle accidents are attributed to drowsiness or sleepiness each year. Fatigue is a factor in nearly one-third of truck accidents where the driver is killed. Taking medications and then going to work can be dangerous. So, when you are ill, what should you do?

In many cases, your employer may not want you to show up for work when you have a bad cold or the flu. Not only does your risk of injury increase if medication causes you to be drowsy, but your productivity is likely to be poor as well. In addition, you may pass a virus to co-workers so that they too become ill and your own recovery may be delayed if you aren't getting enough rest to fight the ailment. If you must go to work and you need to take medications, remember the following:

- **Let your supervisor know.** You probably should not do tasks that require the use of a respirator, or that are highly demanding, physically. Also, should you be injured, your supervisor and emergency responders will need to know what medications you are taking if you are unable to recall.



- **Read the label.** This is where you will find the information you need about dosage and side effects. If you cannot read or do not fully understand the label, ask or phone the pharmacist.

- **Do not mix medications.** Remember, these pills or capsules are chemicals. They may be incompatible when mixed, causing more harm than good. A mixture of medicines, or medicine mixed with alcohol, may intensify a side effect or even be dangerous.
- **Do not try new remedies during work hours.** Experiment with something new or different over the weekend. Everyone reacts differently to cold and flu medications. Find one that works best and gives you the fewest side effects.
- **Follow the recommended dosages.** Exceeding the recommended dose will not help you get well faster or feel any better. In fact, what usually happens is that side effects, such as drowsiness, become more pronounced.



- **WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN.** We give this advice to kids, but everyone should remember it. More cold viruses are transmitted from hand to hand, from doorknob to hand, and then from hand to mouth than in any other way. The best cold and flu solution is prevention! ☺

Did you know...

Monday, December 5, 2011 begins National Handwashing Awareness Week?

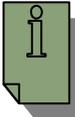
Help prevent foodborne illnesses by washing your hands often and especially before eating.

Link to healthcare hand hygiene policy:

<http://ozone.ohsu.edu/healthsystem/nursing/policy/display.cfm?id=710>

Link to related eStat article:

<http://ozone.ohsu.edu/blogs/estat/2011/09/27/five-fingers-for-5-moments-of-hand-hygiene/>



For a current issue of SafetyNews online, and for archives, visit:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/general-safety/safetynews.cfm>

The SafetyTeam page is available at:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/general-safety/safetyteam.cfm>

These pages are updated regularly. If there are OHSU resources you'd like to see linked, please send suggestions to the SafetyTeam Coordinator at:

safeteam@ohsu.edu

HOLIDAY STRESS BUSTERS:

Tips on surviving the stress of the holiday

Protect Yourself:



The holidays – a time of festivity, parties, shopping, entertaining, religious observances, family gatherings, decorating and... stress! With all the extra demands we place on ourselves and expectations of the season, most of us feel some stress during

the holiday season. The source of the holiday stress is simple: when it comes to time, money and social and family commitments, most people try to do too much. Here are some strategies for making your holidays a time of renewal.

Keep It Simple

A holiday feast doesn't have to be elaborate to be wonderful. Most guests appreciate traditional fare..

keep it simple

Stay in Budget

Learn to say no to expensive holiday ideas. Choose simple thoughtful or useful gifts over elaborate, expensive surprises. How can you enjoy the holidays if you are worried about paying your bills?

Questions? Ask Environmental Health & Radiation Safety:

503-494-7795



Set Priorities

People tend to overextend themselves during the holidays. It's not necessary to attend every party that comes along. Learn to say "no" gently but firmly to social events that are over your limit.

just say no

Plan Ahead



Nothing creates holiday stress like last minute shopping and preparations. Take charge by making lists of things to do and setting aside some time each day for them.

Take Care of Yourself

Counter the holiday pressures by giving yourself some time for rest and renewal each day. With all the parties and preparations, it is easy to pay for the additional time required with our sleep time. The problem for many is that when they don't get enough sleep, they become cranky and don't enjoy what they are doing. Each of us has a different sleep level that we require to feel rested. Take the time for adequate sleep so that you'll have the energy to get in the full swing of things. Avoid overindulgence in holiday food, alcohol, and caffeine.

The holidays are a time for great joy, but for some, a time of stress and frustration. By following these simple suggestions you will help "bust" the holiday stress and enjoy this time a whole lot more. ☺



From our "house" to yours, everyone in Environmental Health and Radiation Safety would like to wish you a happy and safe holiday season!